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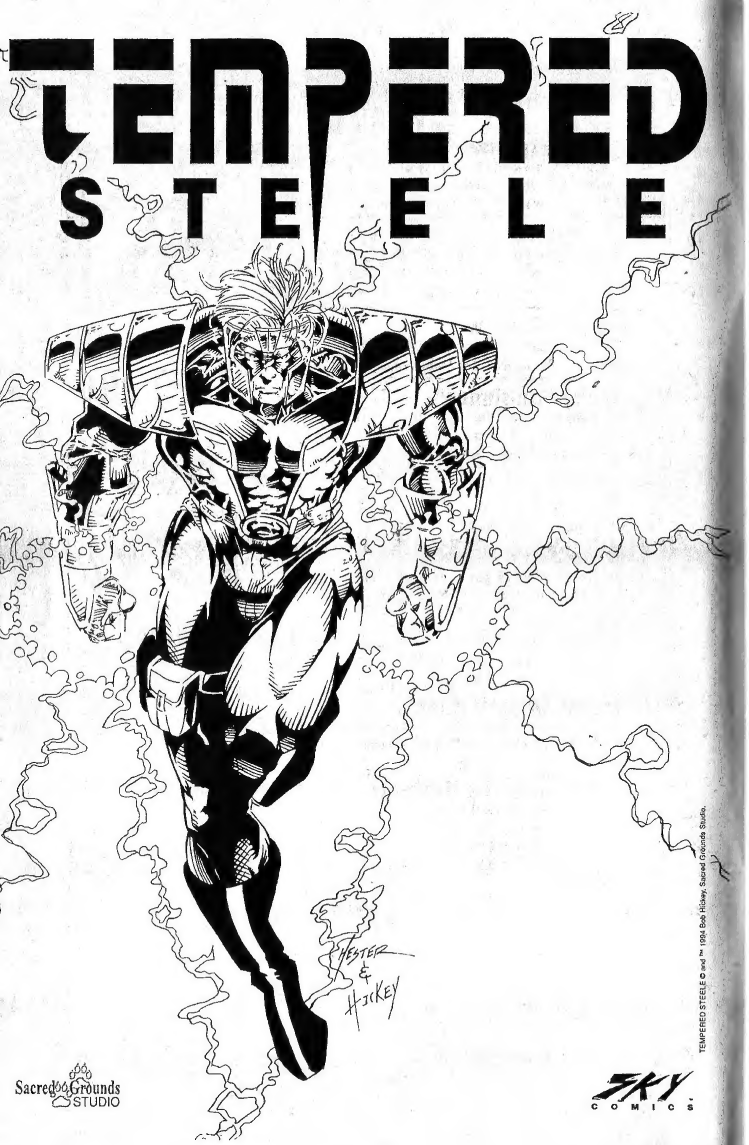

Sacred Grounds STUDIO

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Editorial

Hi. Howya doin'? This is Steve, the assistant ed. You regular readers are used to Joe talking in this space right now, but, well, Joe's kinda preoccupied right now... No, actually... Joe's kinda curled up in a fetal position, crying in his office. See, well, jeez... This is the last *Arena* for a while. Some of you might remember the Editorial Joe gave a few issues back... I think it was our *Arena Spectacular*... when he was chatting about the marketplace and how since *Hero Illustrated's* inception the audience of *Arena* had dropped dramatically. Maybe that was a bit of foreshadowing or something because, well, here we are. Here... want a Kleenex? It's okay... let it out. It IS sad. I mean, I just got here a few issues ago and I'm all kinda broken up about it. And Joe... Joe's taken it harder than we thought... he's been wandering around the office in his ducky PJ's muttering something about how life is senseless and that *Arena's* death must be "avenged." We're all kinda staying out of his way. Anyhoo-- thanks to those of you who stuck with us through the long haul and have supported us even when high-gloss eye-candy fanzines hit the stands... all three of you. Seriously, thanks. It's meant a lot to us that people have followed us through thick and thin. We might be back... maybe.

Steve

Well, I've pulled myself out of the corner long enough to bid you a fond "see ya' later.' We've put out seventeen great issues to date, all of which we are particularly proud. Thanks for being loyal readers and, hopefully, this industry will pull itself together (or knock itself senseless) before we all go spinning down the toilet of extinction.

As a last momento, I would like to salute those creators we have featured through the two years that we've been doing this. I especially give a big wet kiss to the following: Hugh Haynes, Val Semeiks, Lurene Haines, Jerry Ordway, Al Gordon, Dave Dorman, John Byrne, Marc Silvestri, Tom Lyle, Erik Larsen, Frank Miller and Toddy (and you, too, Beau).

Thanks, guys. Thanks everyone. See ya'.

Joe

Thrown To The Lions!

CORRESPONDENCE & ADVICE

An Open Letter from Joe Quesada

I want to apologize for two incidents that have occured in the past few days, both happening during the weekend's New York Comic Book Spectacular.

At the show, a great many fans waiting in line for my autograph were disbursed by security guards. They were told that Jimmy Palmiotti and myself were not feeling well, and wouldn't be at the convention that day. In fact, Jimmy and I were on a panel up until a half hour before our scheduled signing time. Apparently, the guards overheard an anonymous phone call that conveyed this completely inaccurate information. Our apologies to anyone who did not get an autograph or was otherwise inconvenienced.

The second incident is more important and much more complicated.

It is with deepest regret that events of the past few days have made it impossible for me to continue to work for Valiant. I want to apologize to retailers and fans who were looking forward to my work on Ninjak and placing their orders accordingly. My final issue will be #3.

I always intended to pencil the first six issues of **Ninjak**, as well as **Ninjak #0**, and I have operated in good faith. When I appeared at the New York Comic Book Spectacular over the weekend, I sat at the Valiant booth, where I signed comics for hundreds of fans, helping to draw attention to their booth and their company, until the Fire Marshall had to move us to another room due to overcrowding. I told those fans that would indeed by drawing **Ninjak #4**, and several more issues beyond that. Ironically, the morning after the convention, Valiant called me, a call which made it impossible for me to continue drawing **Ninjak** or any other Valiant project at time in good conscience.

I want all my fans to know that I had full intentions of pencilling the first six issues, as well as the "zero" issue, and I certainly did not mean to mislead the people I spoke to at the convention.

My fans have always been my most important concern. Even though it was completely unintentional, I feel I owe all of my fans and supporters my sincerest apologies for misleading them in this manner, and I feel I owe them as complete an explanation as I can give.

I was doing everything possible to get the series back on schedule, and it is with great regret that readers will not be able to see me accomplish this goal. I know many of my fans have requested that I do a lengthy stint on an ongoing series, but on one can be more disappointed than I am that I will not be able to accomplish this on **Ninjak**.

Unfortunately, due to my complete and total devotion to Valiant, I have no other comic book work lined up and I am not considering any future projects at this time. Once this painful episode has subsided, I will make any further announcements concerning my future in the industry press. And thanks to everyone for your support.

Dear **Arena**,

I really enjoy your magazine when I can get it. My dealer orders **Arena** and other Sky Comics products every time they are solicited, sometimes we get them, but more often than not, we don't. I don't know where to, or care to place any blame. I just wanted you to know that there are people out here looking forward to **Arena** and other Sky and Blue Line products, so you keep putting them out and we'll keep trying to get them.

I did receive **Arena #15** and I loved the Erik Larsen interview. No one else brings as much raw power and excitement to comics as Erik! I've only followed his career since the **Doom Patrol**, but it seems as though everytime he leaves a book, there's no more reason to read it.

Lurene Haines' *Getting Into The Business of Comics* was interesting and very informative. It's a shame I only had the pleasure of reading two installments. Think we could see the series collected into magazine format?

Another request before I go: How about an interview with LovernKindzierski and all those guys at Digital Chameleon who do such a fantastic job of the Keith Giffen books?

Yours Truly,
Jerome Squires
South Boston, VA

*Well, as you may have read in the editorial, this is the last issue of **Arena** for a while but it's funny you should mention the compilation of Lurene's articles because we're working hurriedly away on that even as*

CONTRIBUTOR'S INFORMATION

Writing: Address all submissions to *Arena Magazine*, 264 Main Street, Florence, Kentucky, 41042. Please enclose a SASE. Submissions must be typed, double spaced. Keep a copy of your manuscript. Only send copies. Always put your name, complete address, and phone number on each page of article.

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*I type. Look for it in June, **Getting Into the Business**, a co-publishing venture by Caliber Press and Sky Comics to be distributed by the Stabur Corporation, those gallant ones who have brought you all those cool videos starring Stan Lee and featuring McFarlane, Liefeld, the Romitas and more!*

Dear Thrown To The Lions,

I was distressed to hear that you were cancelling publication as of **Arena** #17. I've been reading **Arena** ever since #4 and I must say that it has always been my favorite mag. It's a real shame because you guys offer so much to the industry. I guess it's just not ready for an intelligent, in-depth magazine such as yours. Sadly, people seem to prefer more of the glitz and glamour, no-substance glut of **Wizard** and **Hero**.

Well, we'll miss you guys. I feel like I've really lost something here. You know, we all have.

Here's to hoping things get better.

A sad fan and devoted reader,
Ken Whitman
Gary, IN

Thanks for the encourage ment, Ken. We'll miss you, too. Hopefully things will improve and we'll be able to resume publication sometime soon.

Dear **Arena Magazine**,

Where in the world IS Carmen San Diego?

Jay Lunceford
Sierre Madre, CA

You should know, Jay. It's on FOX-TV, Saturdays at 11:30 a.m.. Jeez.

Dear Thrown...,

I saw you guys at the Akron convention and I must admit that I've never before read an issue of your magazine but after reading the excellent Larsen interview, you fellas have got me hooked. I can't wait to read the Frank Miller interview in #16. He is one of my top ten favorites (as well as Larsen) and so is Todd McFarlane so you guys will really be on a roll as far as I'm concerned!

Keep it up! You've got me drooling for more!

Marcus Landham
Akron, OH

*Whoa, Marcus, watch that drool, buddy! Hey, I guess you know the bad news. Yeah, we're through for now. As I said before, hopefully the industry will straighten itself out soon and there will be a place for us but, until then, thanks for your support. Thank you, everyone, and a fond farewell from **Arena Magazine**.*

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SKY™ COMICS

Interviewin' Toddy

A Talk with Todd McFarlane by *Arena*'s Joe Martin

Joe Martin: *I think that you may have been asked this before but when and how do you remember ever first conceiving the character of Spawn?*

Todd McFarlane: I probably conceived him around 1980 would be my guess. I've got artwork here and it's all dated. Someday I'm going to print this 25-page comic book I started with Spawn, or maybe it was a 40-page story. Anyway, I've got a lot of original pages and a cover for that. You know, when you're trying to break into comic books everybody sort of does their own little stories and stuff. Spawn was conceived at a time when *Star Wars* was really big.

The biggest noticeable difference from the *Spawn* I'm doing now is that the story I did then is set in the future and there's a different set of characters around him. His colors were primarily blue but when I brought Spawn to Image I decided that he looked too Batman-ish so I changed him a little. The costume is pretty close to being the same. I dressed it up a little bit but you still have the cowl and the cape and stuff. That's why I like it. In my mind the costume looks outdated compared to what's hip right now with the *X-Men* and things like that. When I came on a couple years ago with the cape no one was really doing capes. You had Superman and Batman but, other than that, everybody was more into the gear and pockets and pouches and whatever. That's sort of a way to prove to people that I created this character some time ago because his costume is kind of dated. I've got a cape and nobody seems to want capes anymore.

JM: *Yeah, but nobody does a McFarlane cape. I mean, everyone must admit that you are the "Master of the Cape."*

TM: Yeah, I incite a few things when I draw like, for instance, the Spider-Man webbing. That's my little trademark on that character. The cape is one of those things, too, with a few characters. A lot of times people will recognize your work for a variation of things and, for mine, it's not so much the actual look of a person but it's more of the quirky character faces that I do or the things with the capes. It's like, Jim Lee's work is instantly recognizable for the strong drawing ability that he has.

JM: *I figured Spawn had some history to him because it has been remarked that back when you were looking for work you had a picture of him in your portfolio.*

TM: Yeah, there was actually! Uh-huh. Back then I had the comic book and you just jogged my memory because there was this character that I had in there that I'm going to have to check out because I remember I wanted to use him. When I was showing my portfolio around back in '82 or '83 I remember that some of the pieces there had Spawn on them.

JM: *I understand that from the onset* ***Spawn*** *was planned as a finite series. How much farther will it go? Will there be a* ***Spawn***

#100?

TM: The reason I made it finite is because I wanted it to be clear that there will be some form of ending if I got kind of bored with the character or if nobody wanted it. That way it could go out with a blaze of glory, so to speak.

JM: *But the book has sort of transcended what you thought it might do.*

TM: Yeah, well, the book has gotten bigger. The point is, though, will Spawn eventually croak one day? Well, yeah, he will. Whether that will be by issue #25 or by issue #700, I don't know. It depends on A), my enthusiasm for the character and B), whether readers give a crap about reading the story or not. I wanted to give myself an out where, even if people didn't care about the character, I could have that one book where I could say, "He's gonna die in this issue!" That way I could make a couple good sales.

I've got plans to keep *Spawn* going for a while though. I mean, sure, he's got finite power. Once he reaches zero, he's dead. The book might be incredibly hot and I might feel like, "Gee, should I regenerate this character?" And could I think of 20,000 ways to regenerate the character? Yeah. But that's one thing that has always ticked me off in comics. I better have a damn good reason for doing something like that because, to me, dead is dead. I mean, that's like getting cheated, you know?

Of course, I'm switching Spawn into this sort of Batman mode where he only uses like ten points of his power a year so this could go on for a while.

JM: *I recall that Spawn used his powers once to assume this human form and he turned into a white guy. Why doesn't he do this now? Does it use too much power?*

TM: It takes a lot of power and I'm going to reveal in a future issue that skin just rots on him anyway. Otherwise, if it didn't, why doesn't he just make himself look like a good guy and go get a job instead of hanging around in alleys? Spawn hangs around in alleys because he looks like a piece of shit and he will forever look like a piece of shit.

JM: *Spawn is such a product of hell that flesh can't even stand to exist on him.*

TM: It's a temporary thing and another part of the screw that he's been dealt. I just want to put something that is different out there. Something that stands apart from the rest of comic books on the shelf. I mean, there's plenty of good-looking heroes. There's Bruce Wayne and Peter Parker and Clark Kent, but I wanted to be different than that. I just wanted to come up with a bit of a twist when I came up with the character – make him a little different from Batman and Spider-Man and Superman. Also, say, if I ever got bored and didn't want to a Batman riff, then I could so into a Superman riff or a Flash or Green Lantern. I haven't really defined Spawn's powers per se so I can do these things. If I get bored I can have him go lift the Empire State Building or something.

JM: *That's really cool. You seem to be known for taking something and giving it that extra twist so that it stands out from what's been done before.*

TM: If your character looks just like the same characters that everybody else is doing, it's not much of a career builder and that's what you're doing, essen-

tially, is building a career. A lot of times what I'd do is just look at this guy that I'm working on and think about what people haven't done with this character on a consistent basis yet it seems to make sense. I modify it enough so that people can go, "Aw, well, that's that little thing that McFarlane does." Even if it's something they don't like, at least they remember it.

JM: *Everyone is screaming about crossovers. You've got crossover this and crossover that and you're doing the* ***Spawn/Batman*** *thing and people keep wanting a Spawn/Savage Dragon thing. After hearing that and doing Batman, do you want to settle in now and concentrate more on Spawn or keep doing the crossover route because it's just a fun thing to do?*

TM: You know, crossovers are a lot of fun for the creators as well as the readers but, again, there has to be a reason for them within the Image universe. The thing with Batman is kind of a "what if?" story. It doesn't fit into any kind of continuity although we are trying to fit some things dealing with both characters that tie into the book. There's still a lot of information I need to get across about Spawn himself before I want to start essentially devoting pages in the book to another character. There's still a lot of unanswered questions within the Spawn storyline. I want to get around to and solve some of those so that there's no questions and then I can get into more fun-and-games type stuff with other guys' characters and things like that.

JM: *Spawn is such an interesting character that you could have years, decades even, of interesting stories.*

TM: If we play him off right, there's so many elements to deal with here. There's elements of government stories, detective stories, love stories, hell and theological stories... there's a lot of elements that we haven't even begun to skim the top. I'm going to take each one of those a little bit deeper on some kind of level.

JM: *Where do you see Image Comics in five years?*

TM: Obviously I'd like to see that it's going. If we fail, then people are going to think that you can't really do what we set out to do. I would hate to put that kind of fear back into creative people. So, we'd like to survive, obviously, on some level. It might be interesting to see what the next generation of creative people are going to turn out to be. Let's say that Image Comics may not be Erik (Larsen) and Jim (Lee) and Marc (Silvestri) and Rob (Liefeld) and Jim (Valentino) and Todd but a whole new slew of guys. There's got to be some way of maybe passing on the torch.

JM: *Hopefully that will be farther away than five years.*

TM: Well, I don't know. I wouldn't necessarily say that because a lot of us guys probably don't have that much time left in the sun. We've been lucky so far that the public focus has been on us as long as it has. It's been a good amount of time and, other than for ego, I'm not really concerned whether or not Todd McFarlane is still heading Image comic books with the other guys and that I'm still grabbing the headlines and all. I'm more concerned that the message is still being relayed to the creative community and that doesn't necessarily have to be me. If the crowd doesn't like what I'm doing then we have to get something new and fresh up there. The cause for creator rights is still a good battle and we've got to get past just saying, "Todd's on top because of this or that."

JM: *Do you feel like you have reached your pinnacle? Has Todd McFarlane achieved his height?*

TM: [Pause] You know, I didn't think it would last as long as it has, to tell you the truth. Most of us (at Image) made our marks working for Marvel or DC Comics. I was at Marvel for three or four years where I was getting a lot of attention and then to have it extended another two years here at Image. That's six years that people have cared about my artwork and what I'm doing. In my mind, I keep thinking that any day the bubble is going to burst. This is lasting longer than I ever thought it would. Somewhere down the line I assume people will begin to say, "Man, I've seen all those guys' tricks..." On the other hand, I'm amazed by all the opportunities that have been presented to us lately.

JM: *I first opened my eyes to your work way back there on* ***Batman: Year Two*** *and I noticed then that you were doing all sorts of little different things as far as playing around with capes – Batman's cape – and various silhouette effects. I suppose that working on this* ***Batman/Spawn*** *is sort of a bit of reverie for you?*

TM: Yeah, it is. Could I have done this five years ago? Yeah. But I think something a lot of the newer artists don't realize is that the longer you get around to doing a project, the better you're going to be at it. I'm certain that the *Spawn/ Batman* project is going to turn out a lot better than the "Year Two" stuff. A lot of these young guys are really anxious to do these big, big things to rocket their career out there but what they may not realize is that once you do the big gigs it's tough to top that. You're better off spending a couple of years learning your trade on a book that isn't maybe all that popular and then when you get your chance on a big book with a big audience and you've got your skills down then do the big thing. It will turn out to be a far superior project and will have a lot longer lasting effect on your career.

JM: *So your advice would be that these guys should enjoy their upward climb and relish in the simple fact that they are working in comics?*

TM: Everyone wants to be a fan favorite. I think that people should roll with the punches and stop considering a fan favorite status as the end-all-be-all of comics. All of that top ten crap is purely subjective, anyway. It depends all on who you're talking to and who's voting. All of that stuff is just a by-product of doing good work. The work is the important thing. Achieving a fan favorite status shouldn't be the thing that's motivating you to draw, you know. I do good work to entertain myself. I did *Spider-Man* to entertain myself. I did *Hulk* to entertain myself. This *Spawn/ Batman* thing I'm doing for myself. Especially if you're just saying, "oh, well, the public seems to like this or that," so you start drawing like Todd McFarlane or Jim Lee. If you do that, you're not being fair to your creative juices.

JM: *Sort of in that vein, a lot*

--AS THE ROBOT HUNCHES, TAKING AIM, BUILDING A CHARGE THAT COULD BLAST BATMAN TO DUST.
NO HESITATION-- SINCE YEAR ONE BATMAN HAS KNOWN--

of people took quick notice of Stephen Platt. I don't know if you heard the furor but earlier on they were comparing him to this "new Todd McFarlane" or some rumors went so far as to say, "Todd's drawing ***Moon Knight*** *under a pseudonym." Did you hear any of this?*

TM: Yeah. I know Steve.

JM: *What did you think of that?*

TM: I think Steve made a mark because people were really into this Jim Lee mode and then finally they said, "Wow! Here's something totally different. Here's a guy doing Todd." Everybody was doing Jim Lee there for a while–

JM: *Or doing Rob (Liefeld).*

TM: Yeah. So Steve made a difference there. He's doing some stuff now for Rob and whatever else. The one thing he did, though, that I believe has a lot of merit to it is that he made you care about a book that nobody really wanted to care about, which is *Moon Knight*. That's how you make a career. Steve made people say, "Gee, I don't really buy that book but, god-dangit, I gotta buy it because I kind of like the way it's coming." To me, I think that is a far more superior way of showing off your abilities than to come on to something like *Wolverine* or *X-Men* and become a favorite. That's easy. You're taking a built-in audience on a book that's already selling. I think that people should be jumping on something like *Captain America* or *Iron Man* and making a career out of that.

JM: *Or* ***Fantastic Four****, jeez...*

TM: Exactly. I mean, if you're sitting there saying, "Man, I haven't bought a *Fantastic Four* in a long time but that new guy is awesome," and so you pick it up, then you've really achieved something. That's far more effective and has a longer lasting value to it in terms of establishing a career. Certainly in my case I never touched a "mutie" book. I feel it

has much more impact to plant the seed and go out there and make a mark and to hell with instant gratification. If you're really worth it, you'll get there. My mom could sell the *X-Men* right now. For me, as a kid, other than the money, because the *X-Men* has high sales, I'd rather get a hold of *Captain America* or *Thor*. I mean, hell, who can get people talking about *Thor*? I mean, if you were sitting there doing an interview with the guy who's doing *Thor* then that would be something awesome.

JM: *In that respect then you feel that we should applaud Stephen Platt's efforts in doing something to that effect?*

TM: Yeah. He did something amazing. The thing now that people should be watching is whether or not he jumped off the boat too soon. He got everybody talking about him and then bang-boom he's off doing Image at Extreme on some book. I know *Moon Knight* got cancelled but, if I'm not mistaken, he was supposed to do *Cable* for Marvel and, in my opinion, I would have liked to see twelve issues from the kid before he took his next job. When you start to build a career it's also your next move, or perhaps two moves, that make or break you. If you make a bad call early on, like in your first three moves or something, then you're a dead man.

JM: *So this would be a good time to keep our eyes on Platt?*

TM: Yeah.

JM: *Let's say, theoretically, that something happens and Image breaks apart; Extreme and Homage go off producing their own books and stuff. What would you do?*

TM: What would I do?

JM: *Yeah?*

TM: Continue doing *Spawn*. If Image broke up I would start my own label, I suppose. I would call it... Images. Yeah, that's it, Images. But, uh... that won't happen. We're a pretty tight-knit group of guys here. Even though there were a lot of rumors circulating in the past year, nobody really knows us or how we work. We're pretty tight. Besides, we have too many enemies who want to see us fail so, if anything, Image will stay together just to piss people off. The fact that our very existence irritates the hell out of people is reason enough to continue doing what we do. Our success is simply existing, you know. That's all we have to do is continue to exist and that there will make our statement.

JM: *Here's a few questions*

that you can easily answer... then again, maybe not. Who's your favorite writer in comics?

TM: Hmm. Ho... who is my favorite writer?... [long pause] I'd say I like Frank Miller for the sole reason that he really simplifies his stuff and it's really incredibly hard-hitting. On another note, I like Neil Gaiman and Dave Sim--

JM: *They're much more poet-like.*

TM: Yeah. Those guys are just brilliant writers, with the inflection on writers, whereas Frank is a brilliant writer but his stuff goes more hand-in-hand with the art that is offered in his stories. You read this cool stuff and see these cool pictures and you think, "yeah... that's perfect." I like all those guys but for different reasons. They each bring something very different to the table.

JM: *Okay, and then artist?*

TM: When I was younger I loved (John) Byrne and (George) Perez and Michael Golden was brilliant. I saw their work like a lot of young twelve and thirteen year-olds see our stuff today.

JM: *So now that you're so much of a member of the industry, is it difficult for you to pick out somebody who is working currently as a favorite artist?*

TM: You know, actually what intrigues me more -- there's a lot of guys who deserve a ton of attention - is how long it's been that readers have actually gripped us and not let us go. I keep thinking that everyday they're just going to go, "Aw, who the hell is Todd McFarlane? I've seen the same old stuff from that guy for six, eight, ten years." It's like "seen it, done it, been there." I keep waiting for everybody to go and move on to the next generation of kids. There's been the Jim Lee-Erik Larsen-Rob Liefeld-Todd McFarlane era and it came a lot of years ago. It seems like there should be a new group of young punks coming up now, you know. These kids will come in and say, "You guys are old, man!"

JM: *And just kick your butts right out of there.*

TM: Yeah, just say, "Get out of here you old farts and let us show you how it's done. We're faster and stronger than you...", you know what I mean? Something like that. I see young people coming along and I see their stuff and think, "Oh, God, that's awesome" but for some reason the public doesn't grip it as hard as I think they might. Some of that might be the fact that these young turks aren't building enough of a rep by doing a body of work. They do an issue or two and go on. I did *Spider-Man*, between the two titles, for forty issues. Rob did *New Mutants* there for a while and Marc (Silvestri) did *Wolverine* for a while and Erik did *Spider-Man* for a while, you know. We each had a body of

work that was up there but it doesn't seem like guys want to do that anymore or something, I don't know. Take the quick hit, make the cash and get the hell out of there and be a fan-favorite; that's what it seems like it's coming to.

JM: *The industry has changed in that aspect, it seems. Nobody wants to settle in a put up a honest day's work.*

TM: Right. But the opportunities are there so, I don't know, it's a free country so God bless 'em, jump in there and do it, I guess. At the same time I don't think you can sit there and expect to "have your cake and eat it, too." If you want to put in the time and effort, then I think you can get both. If you're trying to just get all of it in the first week you have started your career, then you're just not being realistic. Fans don't want to chase you, they want to grab you. If you're doing only two issues of every book and then jumping, after a while they get tired of you and say, "F**k, I don't know where the hell this guy's going to be next!"

JM: *Absolutely, and then the interest is lost.*

TM: Right.

JM: *Talking to you now, though, it seems that you have an ingrained, subconscious paranoia that helps keep you on your toes and you're constantly changing and warping your stuff now and that may be one real good reason why you have locked in the interest of the public.*

TM: You know, the paranoia does come from the fact that I know that one day the bubble's going to burst. The other thing, too, is that I know I'm in a pretty sweet position right now. I don't want to blow this momentum so I do what I can to keep it going. I'm the master of my own destiny at this stage of the game. One of

the things that I remember thinking about the guys that I collected when I was younger was that I didn't think they updated themselves. I mean, John Buscema is a hell of an artist and a brilliant draftsman but he's drawing a lot of the same suits that he was drawing twenty years ago. First off, guys don't wear suits like that anymore and they sure as hell don't where hats like that anymore. To me, there's a guy that I just want to grab him and shake him and say, "Look! You can still be hip if you just make some modifications and get into the '90s!" If I don't change my ways and sit there and say, "This is the way I draw and I'm not going to bend for nobody or no thing..." then I've lost. That's how the dinosaurs dies. They didn't make any changes. They see the world changing around them but they decided to dig in their feet and say, "We're going to be dinosaurs and f**k you. We're the biggest and the best and we'll do what the f**k we want to do."

Somewhere along the line, if you want to be a successful artist and stay in the limelight, you've got to read the patterns of what's going on and adapt.

JM: *Okay, now, what should we expect from the* ***Violator*** *miniseries?*

TM: What should we expect?

JM: *Yeah.*

TM: A crazy ride. You saw what Alan Moore did with just one issue of *Spawn*... now, he has three issues to get as wacky and weirded out as possible. Violator stars that little, disgusting fat guy we all love and he's called the Clown now. He's being chased by all his sibling brothers and its about how he tries to survive when he's got these guys breathing down his neck. He's used to being the scary guy that chases people down and now we get to see what happens when those roles get reversed.

JM: *I heard he cries to Spawn for help.*

TM: Yeah, I mean, he's in this situation where he's wondering if he should go to Spawn for help or what. Alan makes the point that the Violator was a big, nasty guy when he was chasing people around so now, even though he's this little fat guy, he's still just as nasty, if not nastier. This way, faced with all this, it gives us a chance to show that the character does have some depth to him and you'll see that in the miniseries.

And then, of course, Bart Sears is a hell of an artist with lots of detail and great figure drawing. He gives a distinctive look to the different Violators that are chasing the Clown around.

This miniseries is a full, entire story and I think that once you get all three issues and you sit down and read them through all in one sitting, then you'll get far more out of it. You'll see that it all ties together perfectly.

JM: *Bart's (Sears) work is fantastic. Although he seems to be moving slow, I think this thing will be a magnificent series.*

TM: Yeah. He's great.

JM: *Did he come to you or did you call him?*

TM: I called him. I get to hand pick everybody, of course!

JM: *Who says no? Has anybody said no to you?*

TM: Well, some people have prior commitments and others just aren't into the super-hero mode. *Spawn* isn't the end-all-be-all of comics. I've been very successful, though, at getting the people I want.

JM: *I've heard mention of an* ***Angela*** *miniseries. Is there truth to this?*

TM: Yeah. It'll be written by Neil Gaiman. We haven't got all the details together yet so there's not much I can tell you right now, truthfully. It'll be three or four issues and Greg Capullo will do the art and, as you know, he did a few issues of *Spawn* there.

JM: *A commendable, great job...*

TM: Yeah. A lot favorable elements are lent to this miniseries. If you like Angela from what you saw in *Spawn*, if you like Greg's stuff, if you like Neil, then this will be a perfect choice series. Just like with the *Violator* mini, if you like

"HEY! I NEED A HACKSAW TO GET THIS STIFF OFFA MY ARM! WHY DON'T I FIND A MALL WHERE THEY'LL SELL ME ONE!!" GREAT IDEA!
MANAGER CALLS THE COPS BEFORE I'M HALFWAY THROUGH THE SPINAL COLUMN, AN I STILL CAN'T SHAKE THIS BOZO'S HEAD OFF!
GODDAMN LOUSY RIGOR MORTIS!

Violator or Moore or Bart, then you know what to buy.

JM: *Do you have any idea when readers can expect the* ***Angela*** *miniseries yet?*

TM: I'm shooting for this to hit sometime close after summer. After the summer, when everybody's put out their big stuff and have beat each other to a bloody pulp, I'll come in while they're licking their wounds and hit hard with this. It'll be something cool and different. I just had an Angela costume designed and built actually.

JM: *So, now, what can you tell us about* ***Boof****?*

TM: Boof is another character I created around the same time I created Spawn. He's one of those characters that has been sitting in my portfolio for years and years. With a lot of the business that I do right now I don't really feel like spinning off three or four *Spawn* books so *Boof* will be something different from that. I've done some funny stuff and if you like at some of my characters you'll see that some of them were drawn as caricatures. The *Boof* book is going to be more like *Beavis and Butthead* and then there's another book called *Boof and the Bruise Crew* that will be aimed at more of a 6 to 8 year-old audience. I basically just want to see if there's a way I can sell "kiddie" comics and not just super-hero stuff. Most of the stuff I've done in *Spawn* is pretty much gritty and hell and fire and brimstone and I wanted to do something apart from that.

JM: *Spawn is perhaps not your typical six-year-old reading level.*

TM: Right.

JM: *And I believe John Cleary is the artist?*

TM: Yeah John is the artist on *Boof* and he's really amazing.

JM: *Yeah, I met him at a recent convention and he's a really nice guy.*

TM: Nice guy and great artist. The deal we made was that these books (Boof) will first be available through Wal-Mart stores and then through the Direct Market.

JM: *Last question. Do you ever find yourself missing* ***Spider-Man****?*

TM: Honestly, I can't say that. Did I like Spider-Man? Yeah, I did, but if they had given me *Iron Man* I would've liked Iron Man. I started collecting when I was seventeen so I wasn't somebody that grew up with the character. One of the things that I had to my advantage was that I pretty much liked all characters. I was never one of these guys who moaned and said, "Aw, jeez, do I have to do *Daredevil*?" They gave me *Spider-Man* to launch my career, though, and that was awesome. When I got hold of that, I poured myself into it. Again, I would've done the exact same thing if they had've given me *Iron Man* or *Daredevil*. I would've thought the same way. I would've said, "Awesome!" and done the exact same thing and kind of put my trademark on them in some way.

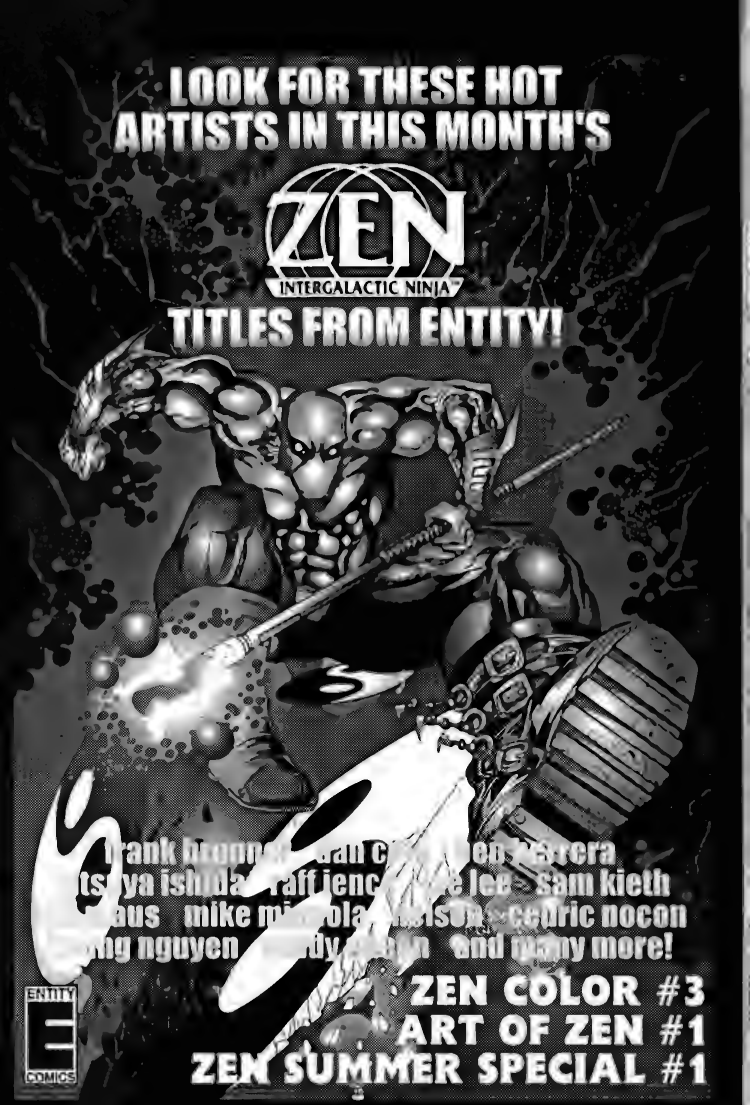
JM: *But since you did get Spider-Man he sort of carved that niche out of you?*

TM: For me, yeah, I guess he did.

LOOK FOR THESE HOT ARTISTS IN THIS MONTH'S

ZEN
INTERGALACTIC NINJA

TITLES FROM ENTITY!



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ZEN COLOR #3
ART OF ZEN #1
ZEN SUMMER SPECIAL #1

ENTITY COMICS

A Chat with RAFF IENCO

He's been called the hottest artist to come out of Canada since Todd McFarlane and Stephen Platt... And he talks to *Arena* about Spawn, Alternative Publishers, and his own creation, Stygmata...

Arena Magazine: *What is Stygmata and who is the publisher?*

Raff Ienco: Stygmata is the newest full-color comic from Entity Comics. Entity also publishes **Zen: Intergalactic Ninja** as well as some parody books under their other imprint-- Parody Press. **Stygmata**, of course, is not a parody book. Entity will start off the **Stygmata** series with issue zero with a full-color foil stamped enhanced cover and color interiors. I pain-stakingly colored the series in watercolors and I was proud of the results. They easily rival or surpass any Image Comic. **Stygmata #0** is also written by John Migliore, veteran writer for Alpha Productions and Silver Skull Studios and is due out in April '94.

AM: *What is Stygmata's purpose? What can you tell us about the character?*

RI: Two thousand years ago, Stygmata was a normal man... actually, a criminal with little or no faith. He was crucified for his crimes and to anyone else that would have been the end of it. But through mysterious circumstances he became a slave of the evil Dark Trinity. *Ooh ah ooh ah*. Because of a growing renewed faith in life, he managed to escape his captors and was rewarded with the power of Stygmata. Rewarded by whom is to be revealed later. *Maybe*.

In todays world, Stygmata battles crimes and forces of a supernatural nature. But he is tired and bitter after 2000 years of service that he seek his final battle and his final rest.

People have compared **Stygmata** to Todd McFarlane's **Spawn** but like John and I contend **Stygmata** is very different in attitude and storytelling. The similarities are in art styles and cape sizes.

AM: *Where will readers get their first glimpse of Stygmata?*

RI: Stygmata made his first appearance as a four-page preview in **Zen: Intergalactic Ninja: The Alternity Saga #3**. He also makes a two-page cameo in the now ongoing monthly **Seeker** book, written by the talented and easy to work with Joe Martin. The first two issues of **Seeker** are also drawn by me. **Stygmata #0** will be his first full book, to be followed by a mini-series if response is good. Response by retailers, fans at conventions and distributors has been very encouraging.

AM: *How did you hook up with Entity Comics and Sky Comics?*

RI: I was fortunate to catch the attention of the very polite Don Chin, publisher of Express Publications and their two imprints Entity Comics and Parody Press, with some pencil samples and the fact that I was one of the winners in **Wizard**'s Cable Cover Contest. Bart Sears had very good things to say about my piece. I sent the **Stygmata** book, which is creator-owned, to Don, who loved it. Don has given the book a lot of support and I'd like to thank him for giving me this opportunity.

I then sent some samples to **Arena Magazine** because **Arena** pays more attention to the alternative publishers than anyone else. The samples gave Joe Martin a reason to call me for a pin-up of his character, Seeker. The strength of that piece led Joe to offer me the first two **Seeker** monthly books. Of course, I was thrilled. I've recently received a lot of good press from **Arena** and Sky Comics and I appreciate that tremendously.

AM: *What are your future plans?*

RI: I'm hoping that **Stygmata** does well enough to warrant an on-going series but in the meanwhile I'll continue with other projects. I'll continue to learn and grow with my art and, of course, do the best I can.

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JOE MARTIN'S
SEEKER
COMING AT YOU
ONGOING!
NOT SUGGESTED
FOR THE MEEK!
HIGH RISK
ENTERTAINMENT
SKY
COMICS

Comic News Flash

Thanks to **Spawn/Batman**, company crossovers seem to be the big thing in fandom recently, and Marvel's finally tossing their universe into the ring. So what's in the plans at Marvel? Are they working hard on **X-Men/WildCATS**? **Ghost Rider and Batman**? Not quite...

In possibly the most, um, *interesting* idea for a company crossover since **Turok/Barney** [*hey, it could happen*], Marvel is proud to present...

PUNISHER AND ARCHIE! The Punisher and those nutty teens from Archie Comics meet up in **When Worlds Collide**, shipping in June. The story goes like this (blame writer Batton Lash): The Punisher is on the hunt for a freckle-faced, red-headed criminal... and it leads him to a certain Riverdale High student. The one-shot comes in two versions, one with an Archie cover by Stan Goldberg (for $2.95) and a Marvel cover by John Buscema ($3.95).

Comic News

AC COMIC NEWS

C. BRADFORD GORBY'S AIR-BRUSHED COVERS

Beginning with issue #73 of **Femforce**, AC Comics is thrilled to announce the introduction of C. Bradford's Gorby's full color air-brushed front covers!

When C. Bradford Gorby did his first air-brushed cover for AC for the **Capricorn Chronicles** bookshelf trade paperback, a high-priced book that only the truest of Femforce would be purchasing, we realized how important it would be for all of our fans to see his air-brush talent. So, AC recruited him once again to do some more airbrush covers, but this time, on the regularly priced book, **Femforce**.

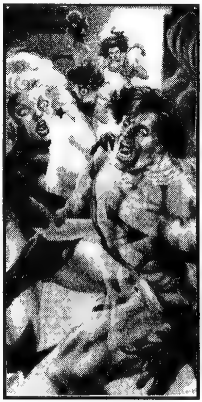
C. Bradford Gorby, best know for his **Femforce** work, has had his artwork appear in numerous comic books in the past year, including **Blood & Roses** (soon to crossover with **Femforce**), **Spawn, Parts Unknown II**, and **Guy Gardner**. But, as Dorothy once said, "There's no place like home." And, AC Comics is C. Bradford Gorby's home. To make sure that everyone knows that, he has produced these spectacular air-brushed cover prints.

The first airbrushed cover, on issue #73, features Ms. Victory and Paragon struggling with the sinister Gorgana (soon to be a member of the Fear Force) in the middle of Femforce Headquarters.

THE FEAR FORCE

Beginning in **Femforce** #72, and running through **Femforce** #76, AC fans will be able to read all about the newest baddies on te block! That's right, the Femforce is going to have some new villains to fight, and they aren't known for their good manners! Their name? Collectively, they're known as The Fear Force, an all-female super-villainess group assembled for the sole purpose of destroying the Femforce.

The Fear Force team consists of four of the toughest, most diabolical villains to ever grace the pages of Femforce, and introduces a new super-villainess to the AC universe. The mem-



bers are:

Darkfire, known for her constantly shifting sense of loyalty and her patented mento-helmet, which allows her ot create illusions and control the thought patterns of her enemy. And now, it's more powerful than ever!

Valkyra, who was once the superstrong Nazi agent known as Panzer, but has since undergone some dramatic changes in appearance, and is after Ms. Victory's blood. She will stop at nothing until she sees the Femforce destroyed.

Proxima, the alien warlord who's unbridled passion for power and control is only surpassed by her unbridled passion for revenge against Femforce member Stardust.

Gorgana, the grotesque fourth member of the team, has incredible powers over the male sex... including the ability to put them into an instant coma!

And finally, there is **Krone**, the first female Kronon to ever be seen by a member of another race. She's got no reason to hat the Femforce, but if she gets to hurt people, she's all for it!

To round off the team, there will be the return of a surprise supervillain, who will lead the team in their head to head confrontation with the Femforce.

It's going to be a huge slugfest in **Femforce** #72-#76, as the Fear Force help AC celebrate its 75th issue of **Femforce**, and start it on its path to **Femforce** #100.

ANTHEM COMIC NEWS

RISK FREE ANTHEM PUBLICATIONS JUMPS INTO THE MARKET

Anthem Publications shipped their first title, **The Bruiser** #1, in the first week of February. **The Bruiser** is written and created by Angelo Furlan who brings an intelligent mix of action, humor and drama to the title. The penciler for the first two issues is Rob Drew, with M Gerald Delaney providing the artwork for the final eight pages of #1 and several pages of #2 in order to enable them to meet their deadlines and ship on time. Beginning with issue #3, Pia J Guerra takes over the regular penciling chores for the title. Her realistic style will provide a unique look for the title and is a perfect match for what Angelo is trying to do with the book.

Anthem is committed to producing high quality, entertaining comic books that people will enjoy both looking at and reading. Unfortunately, due to the number of books solicited each month it is difficult to convince retailers to take a chance on a new, unproven book without the luxury of a large ad campaign. In order to take the risk out of ordering their books for retailers, Anthems is announcing a major decision regarding distribution.

Beginning with **Bruiser** #3 all of their releases, including the upcoming **Andromeda Weapon** #1 and **Cobra** #1 will be 100% returnable by any retailer who orders 25 or more copies of the book. In this way, they hope to encourage retailers to see for themselves the quality of their books and that they appeal to their store's customers. That is called putting your money where your mouth is, and that is what Anthem Publications is all about.

The print run on their first few issues is only 25.000 copies and much of that is targetted for sale at the conventions they will be attending during the year. They are confident that their books can find a loyal readership base if they can obtain proper exposure for them in the marketplace.

BLACKBALL COMICS NEWS

In March, Blackball comes out with the new **Blackball Comics** #1. This 48-page anthology is fully colored by Digital Chameleon and will carry a $3.00 retail price. It includes four short stories introducing characters debuting in their own Blackball series later in the year. The cover by Bisley features *Trencher vs. Blitz*, which is also the title of the comic's lead story. Although Blitz is Bisley's first self-owned character, Giffen will be writing and providing artwork for this first appear-

ance. The second story in **Blackball Comics** #1 is the first chapter of a multi-issue story featuring *John Pain*, who cleanses demons from the streets in an off-beat way. The third story, *A Girl and Her Frog*, pits the title characters against an alien invasion. It features the artwork of Shawn McManus and the writing of newcomer Scott Dunbier. **Blackball Comics** #1 also includes a bonus, unsolicited *Radical Dreamer* story from the popular Mark Wheatley.

In addition to Giffen's Trencher, O'Neill's John Pain, and Wheatley's Radical Dreamer, other Blackball series planned for 1994 include Sharky by Williams and Elliott. Trencher, John Pain, Blitz, and related characters will be featured in a 90-card **Blackball Trading Cards** series in 1994 from SkyBox International, the world's largest manufacturer of comic cards.

In May, Blackball Comics will offer up two new comics to its burgeoning group of fans in May, 1994, releasing the third issue of the **Blackball Comics** anthology and the #0 issue of **Radical Dreamer**, which becomes Blackball's second regular monthly title.

Blackball Comics moves to its new 32-page, full-color format in May, featuring three stories in the months-old Blackball tradition. **Blackball Comics** #3 also features a new, lower cover price of $2.50. The cover story, *Mr. Monster vs. Trencher*, is an epic tale of intrigue and deception from creators Keith Giffen and Michael Gilbert. Trencher and Phoebe get the call on another repossession, and the subject is Mr. Monster's assistant, Kelly. The cover itself, a Giffen/Gilbert jam, features an homage to Jack Kirby's **Fantastic Four** #12 cover.

Mr. Monster also makes a solo appearance in **Blackball** #3, in a special "reprint" of his newspaper strip from the early 1950's by the artist Jake. The final story features another episode of Kevin O'Neill's *John Pain*. Our hero meets Doc Guillotine, who claims to represent the people's law. According to Doc, the only good criminal is a headless one, and Doc has decided John Pain is guilty in this latest installment, Heads I Win, Life You Lose!

In **Radical Dreamer** #0, Mark Wheatley provides a special recap and introduction to his new full-color **Radical Dreamer** series from Blackball, which first appeared in the pages of **Blackball Comics** #1 and #2. The Radical Dreamer, Max Wrighter, explores the potential of the Dream Network, an addictive new form of interactive virtual reality. In his attempt to discover the secret of unrestricted travel in this new network through other people's minds, Max journeys deep into his own soul.

Radical Dreamer #0, which carries a $1.75 cover price, is presented in an exciting new Poster Format for comics. It looks like a comic and reads like a comic, but the last eight pages unfold into a poster, making it the world's largest comic page. With this issue, Radical Dreamer becomes the second regular monthly title from Blackball. **Radical Dreamer** #1, which will also feature the full-color Poster Format, will be released in June.

Blackball Comics #3 and **Radical Dreamer** #0 are available separately for a suggested retail price totaling $4.25, or polybagged together in a special **BlackPack** of delicious food for the mind and eye for just $3.50. Buy 'em together-- because you're not as stupid as they think you are.

CALIBER COMIC NEWS

ZONE RETURNS: CREATOR BRUCE ZICK BRINGS BACK ZONE CONTINUUM

The Zones are back! Returning in March of 1994 will be the all new series of **Zone Continuum**, a creator owned series from Bruce Zick. **Zone Continuum** had two previous issues in 1992 before Zick left to take over the penciling chores on Marvel's **Thor** title for a year. Now he has returned to relaunch the Zone series in a black and

white, bi-monthly series.

The saga of **Zone Continuum** is a complex tale of an ancient race who inhabit electro-magnetic zones around the earth. The residents of these zones are in tune with the electro-magnetic fields, so much so, that they face painful consequences if they breach their zone barriers. Talon is the protector of Zone 27. Zone 27 is shrinking and ready to implode upon itself. Talon must deal with his zone over Manhattan Island that is shrinking as well as his lifelong enemy, Sphere. In a tragic consequence of the diminishing zones, Talon is now separated forever from his true love, Paris, who is now in another zone.

"Bruce is attempting something really different with **Zone Continuum**," said publisher Gary Reed, "if you look carefully at some of his other series such as **Terminal Point** and the upcoming **Atlas** (both of Dark Horse), all of his series are loosely inter-related into an almost mythological hybrid, although each series has its own distinct story, he is building an elaborate universe."

One of the more unusual aspects of Zick's series is his open invitation for readers and fans to join his exclusive fan club, **FOTZ (Friends of the Zone)**. An irregularly scheduled magazine is mailed to the members, referred to as Fotzers, and there is a forum for readers ot discuss the Zone as well as other work from Zick. The number of Fotzers is a couple hundred now and includes the Managing Editor of Princeton University Press and Michael Richards (Kramer of TV's *Seinfeld*).

"**Zone Continuum** was one of our more popular series," said Reed. "But when Bruce had an opportunity to do **Thor** for Marvel and also work on some of the new *Fantasia* animation from Disney, he felt he couldn't continue on the **Zone** with any kind of regular schedule. We decided that it would be best to delay any furthur issues until he felt he had time to work on it consistently."

The first series was originally scheduled for four issues but only two came out. Since the two issues essentially made up a self-contained story, Zick and Redd decided it would be better to have the on-going series start over.

"It will make references to the first two issues but readers shouldn't have any trouble joining right in as Bruce has included some background material within the new first issue," Reed stated.

Also, there is a special eight page segment called the **Zone Primer** which will appear at the front of the new issue. Redd also said that this **Primer** will appear in other Caliber titles as well to introduce readers to a glimpse of the Zone.

CHAOS! COMIC NEWS

LADY DEATH SWIMSUIT SPECIAL

Chaos! Comics is pleased to announce that Lady Death, the ravishing seductress from the netherworld will return in her first, all new, **Swimsuit Special** this May. Featuring a wrap-around cover and centerfold by the man who made her infamous, Steven Hughes, the swimsuit special will be a feast for the eyes. Says creator Brian Pulido, "The challenge for each contributor is to design a new swimsuit for Lady Death. We called in a who's who of artists known for drawing the female form exceptionally well."

Contributor's include: Steven (**Lady Death**) Hughes, Jim (**Catwoman**) Balent, Terry (**Mantra**) Dodson, Joseph (**Cry For Dawn**) Linser, Daerick (**Vampire Lestat**) Gross, Nelson (**Eudaemon**), Hannibal (**Cain**) King, Kevin (**Girl**) Taylor, Paul (**Outsiders**) Pettitier, Kyle (**Nightman**) Holtz, plus a host of outrageous new talent.

DARK HORSE COMIC NEWS

MADMAN COMICS DEBUTS IN APRIL FROM DARK HORSE

Dark Horse publisher Mike Richardson announced the Dark Horse debut of **Madman Comics**, an all-new bi-monthly series, scheduled for release on April 12, 1994.

Created, written, and illustrated by Michael Allred, **Madman Comics** continues the adventures from Snap City where Tundra's **Madman** and **Madman Adventures** left off. The premiere issue begins with an introduction explaining the events of the previous series including the fatal auto accident having left Frank Einstein, aka Madman, a reanimated amnesiac. "In his search to recall his previous life," explained Allred, "Madman is constantly absorbing everything, questioning everything, seeking the answers to everything. He's very aware, insightful, and intelligent."

Editor Bob Schreck added, "While Madman is an intellectual character seeking the deeper secrets of his soul, he is also a lot of fun. Madman's world contains robots, aliens, mad scientists and monsters, and boasts the best of action-adventure, science fiction, mystery and romance. The combination is a fascinating concept-- sheer 'madness'! All of us at Dark Horse are so thrilled and honored to have Michael aboard our team."

"I couldn't ask for a better home for this continuing series," said Allred. "Dark Horse has always been incredibly enthusiastic and supportive of Madman. It's a wonderful creative breeding ground. I've gotten to know most of the people there and I like them a great deal. I trust everyone completely. And to top it off, Dark Horse is a very successful company. It's the perfect way to go."

DARK HORSE RELEASES MIGNOLA'S HELLBOY: SEED OF DESTRUCTION

Dark Horse publisher Mike Richardson announced the release of Mike Mignola's first creator-owned work, **Hellboy: Seed of Destruction**. Published under the *Legend* imprint, the 4-issue miniseries premieres March 22, 1994.

Hellboy is created and illustrated by Mike Mignola, with scripts by Legend's John (**Next Men**) Byrne and colors by Mark (**Batman/Houdini**) Chiarello. The first issue features a special guest appearance by the Torch of Liberty from John Byrne's **Danger Unlimited**. Each issue of **Hellboy: Seed of Destruction** will also include a seven-page back-up feature, *Monkeyman & O'Brien*, by *Legend*'s Art Adams. Hellboy

is presented in an ongoing series of miniseries expected to continue indefinitely, as frequently as Mignola's schedule permits.

Billed as "The World's Greatest Paranormal Investigator," Hellboy made his debut appearance last August in Dark Horse's **San Diego Comic Con Comics** #2, which was given away exclusively to attendees of the '93 San Diego show. The character's first color appearance was in **John Byrne's Next Men #21: Faith #3.**

"**Hellboy** features many prominent fixtures familiar to Mignola fans," explained editor Barbara Kesel, "including a healthy dose of monsters and classical statuary. It's bursting with elements of horror, mystery, and the supernatural, featuring all kinds of unusual creatures ranging from gorillas to frog monsters."

According to Mignola, **Hellboy** is something fun to draw and is very distinct. "It's a combination of Jack Kirby big-monster characters and old Ray Harryhausen stop-motion movie characters. It's also got a lot of subtlety to it. There's a lot of real moody, quiet, weeping tombstone kind of stuff. It's a little bit of everything. I really don't think there's any book out there like it, and that's part of my goal. It's actually a book that I wish someone else was doing because it's a book I'd enjoy reading."

DARK HORSE DEBUTS BUBBLEGUM CRISIS MINISERIES

Dark Horse publisher Mike Richardson announced the Dark Horse debut of **Bubblegum Crisis: Grand Mal**, based on the popular Japanese animated video series. Just in time for manga month, the four-issue miniseries is scheduled for release March 8, 1994.

Bubblegum Crisis: Grand Mal is an all-new cyberpunk saga written and pencilled by Adam (**Dirty Pair**) Warren, the premiere manga-style artist in the US today. An epic techno-thriller, the story is told of a sprawling future MegaTokyo where the police can barely hold up against a wave of corporate-controlled cyborg crime, where vast wealth and poverty exist hand in hand, and where four lovely, lethal, femmes fatales join forces to combat the mounting forces of evil threatening the city.

Bubblegum Crisis originated as an animated video series in Japan in 1987, created by Toshimutsu Suzuki. Suzuki called the series **Bubblegum Crisis** to reflect a world that he felt was on the brink of exploding, like a chewing gum bubble about to burst. The image also proved appropriate to the tone of the series, which combined some light comedy with a potent undercurrent of menace.

"**Bubblegum Crisis** has been one of the best-selling anime series in the US market, and anticipation has been high for the comics series," explained Dark Horse marketing manager John Dennett.

Editor John Weeks stated, "We're particularly proud of the cel-painted cover by Adam Warren and Robert DeJesus, and the unique animation-style interior colors by Joe Rosas. This is the first time Dark Horse has released any manga material in color. Without question, **Bubblegum Crisis** is our greatest manga-style book published yet!"

"Fans and newcomers alike will be blown away by Adam's work on this project," added Dennett. "This is not a book just for fans of Japanese comics and animation. **Bubblegum Crisis** is a pulse-pounding sci-fi tale that will appeal to anyone who enjoys action/adventure stories."

DARK HORSE DECLARES MANGA MONTH IN MARCH

Dark Horse Comics has declared March as Manga Month. Throughout the month, Dark Horse will showcase its array of manga books with special issues, promotional features, contests and giveaways.

Manga is the Japanese word for comics, or "irresponsible pictures" translated literally. The term is often used to describe those comics translated from Japanese to English. Dark Horse has collaborated with Studio Proteus, an American production studio devoted strictly to the translation of Japanese comics, to release the best in Manga.

In celebration of Manga Month, Dark Horse will be shipping seven different Manga titles. Making its debut is Adam Warren's full-color miniseries **Bubblegum Crisis: Grand Mal**, based on the popular cyberpunk Japanese video series by the same name. Fans of Masamune Shirow are in for a double treat with the release of the one-shot police-procedural adventure/comedy **Dominion Special: Phantom of the Audience**, and the two-issue miniseries **Appleseed Databook**. One half of each issue of the **Databook** will be filled with technical information and schematics on all major characters, machinery and locales, while the other half of the book contains an all-new **Appleseed** adventure. The adventures of the Cerberos Panzer Corps continue with **Hellhounds** #2 by Mamoru Oshii and Kamui Fujiwara, and Johji Manabe maniacs will enjoy a triple threat with the lighthearted adventure/comedy **Caravan Kidd II** #9, the space opera **Outlanders: Epilogue**, and the **Outlanders 3** trade paperback collection.

Also in conjunction with Manga Month, Dark Horse is sponsoring its second annual Manga Art Contest. Manga fans are invited to submit original drawings of their favorite character(s) from any Dark Horse manga book. The grand-prize winner will receive the complete 8-part boxed set of **Bubblegum Crisis** videos, runners-up will receive various Manga collectibles, and all entrants will receive a limited edition **Bubblegum Crisis** poster illustrated by Adam Warren just for entering. Entries must be postmarked by May 31, 1994.

DC COMIC NEWS

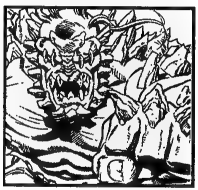
APOKOLIPS NOW!

It was the comic industry event of 1992 and the most tremendous sales day in comics history. Now the team responsible for the landmark **Superman #75** is back to finish what they started. It's the Man of Steel versus the unfathomable force of destruction he battled to the death, in the thunderous miniseries **Superman/Doomsday: Hunter/Prey.**

This thrilling explosive story is barely contained in a 3-issue Prestige Format miniseries written and drawn by Dan Jurgens, with finished art by Brett Breeding.

One year after the evil Cyborg Superman hurled Doomsday's body into space, the real Superman still is haunted by memories of his death in battle. Consumed by the knowledge that Doomsday is still out there, and obsessed with penetrating the mystery of Doomsday's origin, Superman sets out to find the monster and put an end to him, once and for all.

That quest takes him to the nightmare world of Apokolips where, with the help of the time-surfing Waverider, Superman at last learns the shocking origin of his killer. At the same time, Superman must help his old foe Darkseid regain control of the planet from the awesome power of the returned Cyborg.



THE FALL OF METROPOLIS BEGINS IN ACTION COMICS #700

The explosive double-length 700th issue of the original super-hero comic launches a shocking new 5-part story for Superman that literally brings the house down all over Metropolis!

Action Comics #700 is a special issue written by Roger Stern with art by Jackson Guice and Denis Rodier, three of the key creators of *Reign of the Supermen*. The *Fall of Metropolis* begins as Lex Luthor's villainy is exposed to the world. After years as one of the most corrupt and powerful men on Earth. Luthor is deposed by Superman and Lois Lane. But Lex Luthor has never like losing, and if he has to go down... he's determined to take all Metropolis with him! Thus begins a 5-part battle across all the Superman titles as the Man of Steel struggles against Luthor's heinous plans to make an entire city pay the price of his downfall.

MILESTONE EXPANDS

Big things are happening at Milestone Media, as the Milestone line undergoes a major expansion with the debut of three sensational ongoing series. Plus, one of the line's original core characters gets an exciting new look in a special issue presented in two editions.

One of the stars of the Milestone expansion is **Kobalt**. This ongoing series stars a grim new addition to the Dakota Universe-- a hero who has spent years striking fear into the hearts of evildoers and, in the process, has developed a reputation for possessing superhuman powers.

Xombi emerges from the fallout of the *Shadow War* crossover into his own monthly adventures. **Xombi** begins with a 6-part storyline entitled *Silent Cathedrals* in which the freakish David Hyunsuk Kim, the man who can't be killed, finds himself battling the demented villainy of Dr. Sugarman. Sugarman is determined to steal the very nanotechnology that created Xombi-- microscopic robots coursing through his body that repair Kim from any and every injury.

Tying in with the premeire of **Xombi** is Milestone's first retail poster, **Xombi by Moebius**, featuring painted art by the internationally acclaimed artist, Jean Giraud Moebius.

Also following the *Shadow War* crossover, the **Shadow Cabinet** returns in an ongoing series that spans the Dakota Universe, with occasional appearances by the Milestone core heroes, Hardware, Icon, Rocket, and Static. The Shadow Cabinet is a covert team of superpowered heroes with an ongoing mission to save humanity from itself. Issue #1 offers

glimpses into the various heroes' origins, as the Cabinet members' personal loyalty is pitted against their leader's vision of the "absolute good."

Beyond the three Milestone premiere issues, this month sees the release of the extra-sized **Hardware** #16, showcasing the debut of Hardware's new upgraded armor. Presented in two editions, **Harware #16 Collector's Edition** features a "barndoor" style gatefold cover that opens to reveal Hardware's new armor. **The Standard Edition** features the game exciting story without the gatefold cover.

KNIGHTQUEST ENDS; KNIGHTSEND BEGINS!

The *KnightQuest* storyline reaches a dramatic turning point as both *KnightQuest: The Crusade* and *KnightQuest: The Search* conclude. Then they converge in a special epilogue in **Robin #7** that leads into *KnightsEnd*, the next major story arc in the Batman books.

The pace picks up in **Batman** #508, written by Doug Moench, with art by Mike Manley. Jean Paul Valley steps way over the line in his role as Batman, by deliberately allowing the murderous Abattoir to die, an act that also costs the life of an innocent man. **Batman: Shadow of the Bat** #28, written by Alan Grant, with art by Bret Blevins and Bob Smith, brings that decision to light as Commissioner Gordon learns the consequences of Batman's actions and finally confronts the Dark Knight. But Batman's crusade is far from over, and Jean Paul Valley is determined to become even harder-edged... no matter what the cost to Gotham City.

That quest reaches its climax in the landmark **Detective Comics** #675, written by Chuck Dixon, with art by Graham Nolan and Scott Hanna. Batman's costume undergoes its final, ultimate upgrade for his showdown with the deadly Gunhawk, who has taken an entire hospital hostage with a new prototype weapon.

Meanwhile, in **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight** #61, the concluding chapter of *KnightQuest: The Search*, Bruce Wayne is captured by the evil Benedict Asp. Cut off on the island of Santa Prisa during a raging hurricane, Wayne is on his own against Asp and his men as he tries to stop an assassination at the hands of Shondra Kinsolving, the woman Wayne loves. This issue is written by Dennis O'Neil, with art by Eduardo Barreto.

Then, in **Robin** #7, the two *KnightQuest* storylines converge in a special epilogue written by Chuck Dixon, with art by Tom Grummett and Ray Kryssing. Bruce Wayne is back in Gotham City and learns from Robin the full extent of Batman's activities. Now Wayne is forced to confront his successor face to face, leading to the onset of *KnightsEnd*, the next exciting chapter in the ongoing Batman saga.

THE HUNTRESS--STALKING THE NIGHT

Following the enormous commercial success of **Catwoman** and **Robin**, another star of the Batman mythos rockets into her own 4-part miniseries. Young, hard-edged and armed to do some serious damage to Gotham City's underworld, the Huntress stalks her prey without mercy... or remorse.

In this 4-part miniseries by writer Chuck **(Robin, Detective Comics)** Dixon and artist Michael **(Batman/Green Arrow: Poison Tomorrow)** Netzer, the Huntress cracks down on a powerful crime family, working her way up a deadly chain of corruption to its sinister boss, Tough Tony Bressi. In the process, she's forced to face the horrors of her past when a mob enforcer is revealed to be the same man who brutally assaulted her as a child. At the same time, the Huntress is being stalked by the mysterious and dangerous assassin Redzone.

DEFIANT COMIC NEWS

THREE NEW TITLES UNLEASED FROM THE DEFIANT UNIVERSE-- What Rough Beasts Tear Toward Neighborhood Comic Stores...? Surely Some Revelation is At-Hand

Defiant, the comic book company with an attitude, announced the introduction of five new series titles soon to be added to the company's current roster of three. "By the end of 1994 we will be shipping eight monthly comics," said Clark Smith, Defiant's marketing and promotions manager. "At that point we will have doubled our retail shelf presence. Fans will have access to two Defiant books every week."

The five new titles include **War Dancer**, which began in February; **Charlemagne**, scheduled for March publication; **Dogs of War** slated for April, **Prudence & Caution** scheduled for May publication; and **Glory** on the drawing board and forecast for August or September publication.

The **War Dancer** series was co-created by comics legend Alan Weiss and master universe builder Jim Shooter, and is the linchpin of the first Defiant mega-crossover, called *Schism*, scheduled to rock two universes late in the summer of 1994. The tale begins in the distant past and unfolds a tale of grandeur and power that spans centuries and explodes with cosmic-scale superhero action. In the first issue, **War Dancer** reveals the origin of Plasm, the center of the Defiant Universe, and its startling connection to earth. In issue #2, War Dancer pursues a lost squadron of Plasm invaders who lead him to the New Jersey swamps where he encounters an even greater threat-- enter Mr. Massaker, and exit New Jersey in smoldering ruins.

The story of **Charlemagne** begins in Louisville, Kentucky in 1973 when 12-year-old Charles Smith runs away to Vietnam in search of his MIA brother. The horrors he discovers in a country ravaged by war changes him forever. Now, 20 years later, he embarks on a second life fulfilling his true destiny as the superheroic champion of Earth. The series will be officially launched in March. **Charlemagne** #1 will be written by Dan Chichester, pencilled by Adam Pollina and inked by Mike Witherby.

Dogs of War will be pencilled by Grey, written by noted television writer Arthur Loy Holcomb, and published beginning in April. Holcomb is best known as a science fiction writer for books and motion pictures. Holcomb recently authored two stories which became episodes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. **Dogs of War** is his first foray into the comic publishing arena, and promises to bring a fresh and uncanny perspective to the medium. In the first issue Shooter and Ironhead, aka Mouse, abandon the war on Plasm to become vigilantes on Earth.

Prudence & Caution is written with the power and compelling characterization only Chris Claremont, the man who made the **X-Men** number one for 17 years, can deliver. It's the story of a sweet, charming, pretty, young lady who happens to conquer planets for a living, and an earnest young man who has the strength of 200 and a genetically engineered symbiotic left arm with a mind of its own. The two form the most unlikely superhero team of all time in high-action, high-adventure "buddy" advetmure comic. Featuring Rick "Ironhead" Tietz, of **Warriors of Plasm.** Prudence was introduced first in **Warriors of Plasm** #5.

Glory is a traditional male-oriented superhero series but with a twist-- she's an empowered housewife who made her editorial debut several months ago in Defiant's established series **Warriors of Plasm.** The first issue will be published late this summer or early this fall. In the interim the Defiant team is accessing highly unusual avenues of information to help form her character.

Senior editors from publications such as **Ladies' Home Journal, Cosmopolitan** and **First For Women** have participated in editorial "round table" discussion with creator Jim Shooter and Defiant's editorial director Deborah Purcell. "Their input has been invaluable," said Smith. "These editors are cultural opinion leaders and have tremendous intuition about Glory's role as a superhero. The series is designed for a male audience but it's important that women be able to relate to is, as well," he added.

"We anticipate that during 1995 the Defiant Universe will expand to 12 or 14 books," added Purcell. "But for now, our aim is to maintain the tight continuity Jim Shooter is known for." Defiant's current title line includes **Warriors of Plasm, Dark Dominion** and the **Good Guys.**

IMAGE COMIC NEWS

FROM THE EXTREME

In March, Stephen Platt comes aboard as the regular penciller for **Prophet** starting with issue #5! The first four issues of *Extreme Prejudice* will also ship in March: **Team Youngblood #7, Brigade #8, Bloodstrike #9** and **Supreme #11**! This crossover will also solidify a lot of Image history and set the dominant themes of the participating books for months to come!

In April, the final three chapters of *Extreme Prejudice* will be released along with the debut of a new title, the **Newmen**. The Newmen are an integral part of the Extreme Prejudice crossover and the story continues in their own book. This book will be penciled by Jeff Matsuda and written by Eric Stephenson. The characters were created by Rob Liefeld!

In May, Rob Liefeld will be ending his sabbatical and joining Danny Miki and Kiko Taganashi to do part of **Team Youngblood #9**, splitting the book between this team and the normal creative team. In **Bloodstrike, Brigade** and **Supreme**, you'll get a glimpse into the future with *Images of Tomorrow*.

In June, **Youngblood #6**!

IMAGES OF TOMORROW: THREE EXTREME STUDIOS TITLES JUMP TO ISSUE #25

Battlestone the leader of Youngblood? Chapel a Hellspawn? An evil Supreme? Does this seem wrong to you? These are just a few of the stimulating revelations you'll receive from a glimpse into *Images of Tomorrow*! The month of May heralds a bold, innovative move by Image Comics when **Bloodstrike, Brigade** and **Supreme** jump to issue #25, unveiling the culmination of the incredibly intricate plots planned for the elapsed time. "We [at Image] are big fans of future books. No speculation is involved here-- this is precisely where these books will be at this point in the future, all the way down to the letters' pages and the advertisements," says Extreme editor Eric Stephenson. "We're very excited about what we're doing and have been planning this for quite some time now. In fact, clues were planted in both **Youngblood #0** and in **Supreme #7** that initiated this story which unfolds in late '95." The regular sequencing of these books will return to normal in June and will skip issue #25 when the appropriate time comes. Stare into the face of the future today as Image Comics ushers in the next phase in the evolution in comics!

The stories will be brought to you by the creative talens of Rob Liefeld, Eric Stephenson, Marat Mychaels, Brian Murray and Richard Horie.

DEATHMATE RED AND TROLL SELL-OUT! LIEFELD BOOKS PERFORM WELL IN LAGGING MARKET

"**Deathmate Red** and the **Troll** one-shot have sold out!" says Image publisher Tony Lobito. "Anyone trying to get copies from the Image office or from Extreme Studios is out of luck." Marketing and promotions director for Extreme Studios, Matt Hawkins, continues, "We've been getting reports from all over the country that these books have completely sold out! Depending on the area you're in, demand for Rob Liefeld's **Deathmate** chapter has shot the asking price up to between $8 and $15!" For those fans and retailers still attempting to get copies at cover price, Matt Hawkins added one piece of advice, "Don't hold your breath!"

TIM SALE TO DRAW DEATHBLOW: NOTED LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT AND GRENDEL ARTIST JOINS WILDSTORM TEAM

Fresh from his huge success with DC's Batman titles, master stylist Tim Sale takes over the art chores on Jim Lee's **Deathblow**. Sale, long considered an artist's artist, is well known and respected by his peers for his stunning page designs and dynamic use of negative space.

Lee, a long-time fan of Sale's work, is excited by the darker look for his action/adventure anti-hero. He considers Sale and **Deathblow** to be the perfect match of style and subject.

Sale's work on **Deathblow** begins with issue three, offering a unique chance to see a true collaboration between two masters of the comics page, as Sale draws from Lee's layouts. Sale goes solo on issue four, and hits full steam in issue five when **Deathblow** becomes a full-length monthly series.

Since it was announced in the pages of **Deathblow #2** that the book would go to a quarterly schedule, the offices of Wildstorm Productions have been flooded with mail demanding the lethal solier appear more frequently. Lee had been looking for a way to put Sale's talents to use, and the fan outcry for more **Deathblow** presented him with an opportunity to do so.

With scripter Brandon Choi on board to maintain the continuity of the series, the revamped **Deathblow** is expected to captivate new fans while continuing to satisfy the legions of current ones.

MALIBU COMICS NEWS

WARSTRIKE JOINS THE ULTRAVERSE

From his debut in the first issue of the hit Ultraverse comic, **Mantra**, to his adventures in **Ultraverse Premiere**, his popularity has finally landed Warstrike his own monthly title! In this all-new first issue, hitting shelves in May, Warstrike is thrown into a kidnapping conspiracy and winds up neck-deep in Ultras who won't be satisfied until he's dead! What started out as a rountine kidnapping case takes an ominous turn as Warstrike discovers there's much more to this case than what appears on the surface. The trail leads him deep into the heart of the South American rain forest, where Warstrike must face the darkness within mankind--and himself. Comes wrapped in a cover by Walt (**Star Slammers**) Simonson!

WALT SIMONSON JOINS BRAVURA WITH STAR SLAMMERS

Once upon a time there was a race of men who could out-shoot, out-fight and out-kill anybody. They were paid fabulous sums of money to act as mercenaries. The practice became so lucrative, they decided to go into business. They became the most successful businessmen in history. And they called themselves... Star Slammers!

"It's simple. They go out and kick butt, they take names and they do it for money," creator Walter Simonson explains.

In part one of this all new mini-series, Simonson's acclaimed Star Slammers are back in *The Minoan Agendas*, a five part saga that spans the galaxies. This time, the unthinkable has happened, one of the Slammers' own, Rojas, has been captured alive!

MARVEL COMIC NEWS

RIDER OF THE FLAME

Ghost Rider screeches back into town in **Ghost Rider #50**, hitting stores in April with a die-cut, metallic foil-stamped cover! Returning to the Marvel Universe as a much harder-edged Spirit of Vengeance than ever before, even Vengeance is stunned by the degree of brutality that Ghost Rider is willing to use to accomplish his goals.

When Vengeance is kidnapped by a crimelord named Anton Hellgate, Ghost Rider penetrates the innermost sanctum of this super-powered perpetrator to rescue him. The resurrected hothead will also attempt to disrupt Hellgate's shady dealings, fostering a hatred between the two which will culminate in Hellgate becoming Ghost Rider's greatest enemy ever.

When Ghost Rider asks John to help him resuce Vengeance, Blaze reluctantly agrees and, in his absence, Roxanne is killed and his children disappear. John blames Ghost Rider, and a bitter rift develops between them, changing their lives and the direction of this series forever. **Ghost Rider #50** will be every bit as important to the series as **Ghost Rider #1**, and no reader will want to be without it.

After losing his family, Blaze attempts to put his life together in **Spirits of Vengeance #23** in April, which marks the conclusion of the series and will lead into the **Blaze** series in May. John tries to assemble a smaller version of the Quentin Carnival to take on the road. Steel Wind is on the scene, and despite his bad feelings about her, Blaze forgets his problems by helping

her with hers. And he almost does forget, until he learns that Centurious is still alive. Blaze vows that his last heroic mission will be to destroy him. After tracking Centurious down, he really believes he'll be able to defeat him at last. Strangely enough, Blaze has found a new ally-- Steel Wind, his former enemy.

ALL GREEN WITH ENVY

Clear your calendar because we're having a party! You are cordially invited to the wedding of Rick Jones and Marlo in **Incredible Hulk #418**, and it is going to be one serious wingding. Just wait'll you see the die-cut, gatefold wedding invitation cover!

When the Impossible Man gets hold of the Fantastic Four's wedding invitation, he makes copies and takes it upon himself to send them to whomever he thinks should be there! As a result, everybody who is anybody in the Marvel Universe shows up for this gala (War Machine, Silver Surfer, Captain America, Namor, and the new Fantastic Four to name a few), and that include more than just a few villains, as well. And where is the Hulk in all this excitement? Well, he and Betty will do their bit as Best Man and Matron of Honor!

Of course, because the **Incredible Hulk** is written by the incredible Peter David, it can't be all cake and champagne. And with artist Gary Frank and Cam Smith on the job, readers can expect myriad mishaps and fisticuffs to add to the excitement. Trust us, Rick and Marlo's wedding will bear to resemblance to your cousin Ethel's!

MILLENIUM COMIC NEWS

VIGIL

Grace Kimble, the tough ex-cop turned vampire, is back.

After a brief hiatus, the creators of comics' most intriguing vampire series have returned with an all-new 48-page installment in the dark and gritty vampire series, **Vigil**.

The critically acclaimed series by writer Arvin Loudermilk and artist Mike Iverson-- formally published by Innovation-- will be a new addition to Millennium's growing line of horror comics under its *Borderland* imprint. Other titles include **Asylum, HP Lovecraft's Cthulhu, the Collector's Dracula** and the upcoming **Shock the Monkey, The Edge: Of British Horror** and the **Star Gate.**

The newest installment in the series, **Vigil: Vamporum Animaturi**, follows the gun-wielding, tough-talking Grace and movie star Greg Tonell, both on the lam in Mexico. Tonell has been framed for killing a ruthless vampire talk-show host. But the real killer is Grace, a self-appointed vampire hunter.

Now, Grace is seeking a cure for the deadly vampire virus-- Vamporum Animaturi-- to quell her lust for blood. But the police are in Mexico. And a group of vampire cultist, who worship the ancient god Kukulkan, want Grace to be their vampire God! Can Grace keep from infecting her lover Greg? Time is running out-- for both Grace and the world.

The unique series features great characters, a complex story and a unique blend of horror, action/adventure, romance, and-- with its constant nocturnal setting-- a dash of film noire. To date, Loudermilk and Iverson have published four installments-- nearly 200 pages-- in the ongoing storyline, although each segment stands alone as a complete story. Don Thompson, editor and reviewer at **Comics Buyer's Guide**, has called the series an "unexpected treasure" with "good solid storytelling, both in script and art."

The first **Vigil** story, *Fall from Grace*, appeared in 1992.

"I like to describe **Vigil** as a hard boiled blood-sucking thriller," Loudermilk said. "We've tried to push aside the supernatural aspect of traditional vampires to create a more realistic atmosphere."

Grace Kimble is the only vampire in the storyline who realizes that vampirism is a virus, Loudermilk said. "It's a medical reality, not some abstract curse. The 'creature of the night' stuff is all in their minds. Because Grace is a former police woman, she has an inherent urge to protect the innocent," he added. "She doesn't approve of other vampires gorging on humans for sustenance." So she stalks the worst of them-- and kills them.

Grace's world is turned upside down when she falls in love with Tonell, the star of several action/adventure films. Her need for blood-- she buys it on

the black market in plastic hospital packets-- threatens their romance. Can she avoid infecting her lover? "Both Grace and Greg would like to be able to patch together a life for themselves," Iverson said. "Tragically, the possibility that a creature like Grace may lose control over the bloodlust and attack her human lover will always loom large over their relationship."

But **Vigil** fans can rejoice. The creative team has plenty of ideas for future issues-- including an upcoming origin story. Look for it soon, exclusively from Millennium Publications.

MIRAGE COMIC NEWS

NEXT SERIES CANCELLED

Mirage Publishing has restructured its publication and release schedule for the first half of 1994 in order to eliminate the late-shipping problems that have affected some of its titles, most notably the *Next* imprint series. All outstanding orders for **Xenotech #2-#3**, **Stupid Heroes #2-#3**, and **Bioneers #1** have been cancelled and will be resolicited for Fall release.

With the transition from a primarily black-and-white to an all-color publisher, along with the addition of a whole new imprint-- *Next*-- that includes three titles, Mirage Publishing experienced some growing pains last summer. Production delays resulted form the search for colorists and the increased burden on prepress, computer-coloring and printing vendors.

The late shipping problems which have affected several titles have been brought under control by changing printers and finding additional colorists; however, in the case of the *Next* series the shipping delays which occurred were serious enough to undermine the effectiveness of all three comics. According to Publishing Director Tim Toffoli, the three *Next* titles initially had been planned to come out in exact conjunction with each other, and a massive publicity campaign had emphasized that fact.

"The timing of the release schedule was crucial to the storylines for all three books because the three mini-series culminate in one big crossover, **Maelstrom**. We had also created a great promotion with the trading cards included in each book, where readers could collect all nine *Next* issues, plus the crossover, and then redeem coupons from those books for a more complete set to the trading card series. Unfortunately, production delays were more severe on certain of the *Next* titles than others. We tried to correct the situation by staggering the release on those books, but when this solution appeared to be unsatisfactory, we decided that it was in the best interest of the series as a whole to cancel outstanding orders and resolicit **Xenotech, Stupid Heroes** and **Bioneers**, starting over with issue #1, for this coming Fall.

"One of our top priorities for 1994 is to ship all titles on time. To this end, Mirage has implemented a 'finished art-in-hand' policy. We will not solicit any title until we have the completed project first. Cancellation of the *Next* titles, for the time being, has freed us to concentrate on bringing all of our other titles into a timely release schedule, and when we do solicit for **Bioneers, Xenotech and Stupid Heroes**, the entire three-issue run for each book will be complete and in hand.

"Mirage Publishing apologizes for the inconvenience which these new arragements may bring, but we think that retailers and readers alike will be pleased with the changes we're bringing about. Improved printing quality and a switch to environmentally friendly paper and inks, plus our new pledge to on-time shipping is just another stage in our solid commitment to produce great comic books."

SKY COMIC NEWS

SKY COMICS ARE IN THE CARDS

You've read **Blood & Roses**, now get the cards. Coming in April, this set of 24 cards feature all-new artwork by **B&R** artists Brad **(Femforce, Parts Unknown)** Gorby and Bob **(StormQuest)** Hickey. See Christiana Blood and Tamara Rose, and lots of other characters from both miniseries **(Future Past Tense, Search for the Time Stone)**. There's no collecting to it-- lay your cash down once and you've got the whole set! Each box will be signed and numbered by **Blood & Roses** creator Bob Hickey, and contains one randomly inserted specialty card.

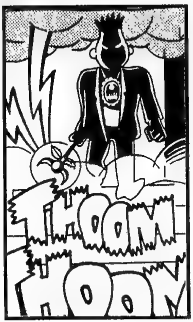
TIMBUKTU COMIC NEWS

ZOMBIE BOY RISES AGAIN

1994 marks the howling return of America's Favorite Undead Adolescent, Zombie Boy in the exciting new **Zombie Boy Rises Again** premiering the March in comic book shops nationwide. Here's a chance for those who didn't get their hands on a copy of his first two comic books appearances to get up to date!

Mark Stokes has been a cartoonist for twelve years now and is currently self-publishing his third comic book featuring Zombie Boy. Zombie Boy is eleven-year old Morgan McCorkindale, the son of wealthy Beverly Hills parents who became one of the living dead on a family vacation to Voodoo Island. The stories put a modern spin on Charles Addams and combine that with a mixture of classic television sitcoms and **Mad** magazine sensibilities. For instance, the McCorkindale's next-door neighbors are the Clampett Family, right off the truck from hillbilly country. And look for the appearance of Jasper, a very different kind of apparition who could care less if he had friends!

Zombie Boy, the Ju-Juvenile, was unleashed on an unsuspecting world in 1988 in **Zombie Boy#1**, a book that Mark Stokes created, wrote, pencilled, inked, lettered, printed, folded, stapled, and cut himself. The original print run on that book was 2500 copies which were distributed nationally. **Zombie Boy's Hoodoo Tales #1** was released in November 1989 and was also distributed nationally. **Zombie Boy Rises Again** represents a reprinting of both of these books in a 48-page collected volume. Also included is original unpublished artwork by Moebius, Kyle Baker, Gilbert Hernandez, Richard Dominguez, Ben Edlund and Chester Brown. This is the first time that Zombie Boy has been before an audience since 1989.



TRIUMPHANT COMIC NEWS

TRIUMPHANT TAPS TALENTED TRIO TO HEAD SUPPORT TEAM

Throughout the month of December, Triumphant began developing its support team to tighten up its editorial, marketing and promotion departments. By mid-January, the heads of those support teams were confirmed. Culling their resources from a variety of areas that include the comic industry, radio industry and our nation's educational system, the mainframe of Triumphant's support team reads as follows:

Darren Dean (Promotions Manager)-- Many industry professionals will remember Darren as the host and producer of the nationally syndicated radio program, *The Fantastic Forum*, the country's premier comic book talk show. When he voluntarily put the show on hiatus to pursue other interests in December of 1993, he joined the staff of Triumphant citing that, "...The viability and potential that Triumphant offers the comic industry as a publisher is great, providing endless, creative possibilities that, with the right edge to it, can easily outshine its competition. As Triumphant's new Promotions Manager, it is that potential I seek to exploit." Darren brings with him more than thirteen years experience in the comic book industry that began in 1981 working as an event organizer for Creation Conventions.

Kevin Dwyer (Assistant Story Editor)-- Kevin comes to Triumphant with a Masters in English from SUNY New Paltz, as well as several years experience as a freelance comic book writer. An award winning playwright and an Instructor of Writing at SUNY New Paltz, it's his education and experience that will bring Triumphant's tales the clarity and crispness they deserve. Of his presence at Triumphant he says, "It's nice to work for a company with a sincere 'family' atmosphere. Everyone communicates well and seems to share a real passion for comic books. All this, I think, is intrinsic to producing a good comic."

Marc Patten (Marketing Manager)-- Entering the industry as a convention coordinator, Marc quickly moved on to managing two very successful comic book stores. After that, his tenure at Heroes World Distribution Center made him visible to comic industry professionals, first as Re-order Manager then as Publisher Liason and Director of Purchasing. Patten brings his seven years of industry ex-

perience to Triumphant stating, "...These guys are young, crazy and innovative! I think the industry needs (publishers) with fresh ideas and less red tape to implement them. I think we're going to have a blast!"

Of the new additions to Triumphant, President Adam Post says, "Triumphant is beginning to enter its next level in 1994. As we continue to grow, we need a support team that will help Triumphant grow, a support team that we can have confidence in, take pride in and, above all, one that will get the job done. Rest assured, we've done our level best to choose the best possible candidate for each area of our team. We're pleased to have Darren, Kevin and Marc on board, as we are with all the other top young talents now working with Triumphant."

MARCH OF THE SCAVENGERS

March is Scavengers month, and not only will Triumphant be releasing their regular **Scavengers** title (with issue #9), but they will also offer a double dose of glimpses into the Scavengers' strange and violent past.

First off, they will be releasing **Ximos: Violent Past** #1 and #2. These books will provide Scavengers fans an opportunity to witness the origins of Scavengers leader, Captain Ximos, as well as his first taste of war. Featuring a script by regular **Scavengers** writer, John Riley and pencils by talented newcomer Bill Knapp-- this book is sure to be hot!

Then, to really get things heated up, Triumphant will be releasing **Scavengers #0**, the book that will take readers back to the events occurring immediately prior to Scavengers #1. Written by John Riley, this issue also marks the return of fan favorite Franchesco to the book he helped co-create. This exciting entry to the **Scavengers** lineup will be available in three separate editions. The first edition is a newsstand edition retailing at $2.50. Next, is a free edition allotted to retailers in increments of 4 times their lowest ordered March Triumphant title. Finally, there will be a special mail-away coupon redemption edition. With all the possible ways to get **Scavengers #0**, it is one book that cannot afford to be missed.

Don't be left out as things heat up in March! Jump aboard the Journeyman now for the closest look at the Scavengers ever.

VALIANT COMIC NEWS

JOE QUESADA TO LEAVE NINJAK

Ninjak #3 will be the last issue penciled by Joe Quesada for the time being. Because Quesada had fallen extremely far behind on his deadlines, Valiant chose to schedule an alternate penciler for one issue of the series. Quesada felt that this would interfere with his development of the Ninjak character and has removed himself from the book.

"I have nothing bad to say about Joe. He's an incredibly talented artist and he's a great guy," said Valiant's Vice-President Marketing Marty Stever. "Joe worked very hard on **Ninjak** #1-3 and that hard work shows on every page. However, due to a variety of personal and professional conflicts, Joe was unable to maintain a monthly schedule."

"We felt that the most reasonable solution would be to have the series writer, Mark Moretti, pencil one issue and allow Joe the time needed to get caught up," continued Stever. "Publisher Steve Massarsky made this decision, in consultation with Editor-in-Chief Bob Layton, after Joe had turned in the pages for **Ninjak** #3. We were all surprised by the news that Joe felt that he could not tolerate our plan to allow him to catch up. Joe was offered reassignment to **Ninjak #0**, our big summer project **The Chaos Effect**, or the option to pick up **Ninjak** again with issue #5."

"It's unfortunate that Joe simply could not maintain a monthly schedule," said Stever. "It was clear that we might have to schedule an alternate penciler for an issue several months ago, which is why Joe's name was not included on the solicitations for **Ninjak** #4 through 6. Obviously, given **Ninjak**'s monthly schedule, Joe needed help to catch up and we offered it. We're very sorry that Joe would not go along with any option presented him."

"**Ninjak** #1 through 3 speak for themselves," concluded Stever. "The combination of great writing and great artwork led to the creation of great comics. Once again, I have nothing bad to say about Joe, and we feel Joe is a stand-up guy. We're sorry we could not reach an accommodation to his liking, and we look forward to seeing more of his dynamic pencils in the future."

Taking over pencils for Quesada on **Ninjak** will be the be the series writer Mark Moretti. Moretti has already produced much of the promotional art for the series and now brings his crisp pencils and sharp storytelling sense to one of Valiant's most popular characters. ***See letters page for more details.***

WARP COMIC NEWS

NINTH ELFQUEST COLLECTION FOCUSES ON RAYEK

Warp Graphics publisher Richard Pini announced the release of **Rogue's Challenge**, the awaited ninth volume in the Elfquest graphic novel series.

Rogue's Challenge focuses on the life and times of Rayek, the magic-wielding Sun Villager who becomes master of the lost Palace of the High Ones. The volume includes a tale of his most distant ancestor, chronicles the trials and tribulations of his youth in the desert village of Sorrow's End, and concludes with an epic clash that pits him against Cutter, chief of the Wolfriders. "Rayek has always been **Elfquest**'s 'Peck's Bad Boy,' said Richard Pini. "He's proud, he's arrogant, he's often a pain in the rear, but he's also got a dark nobility that makes him one of our most intriguing characters. For the first time, this collection lets the reader inside Rayek's occasionally thick skull."

Though it consists primarily of material previously published in comic book form (**Elfquest: Hidden Years** issues #6 through #9 1/2), **Rogue's Challenge** also includes new art and story by **Elfquest** creators Wendy and Richard Pini, done exclusively for the collection. The additions take the form of framing sequences between the individual stories. "We originally saw it as a collection of Rayek stories not neccesarily related. When we shuffled them in a different order, we realized we didn't have a bunch of unrelated stories. We had, rather, something that led so well into the fight between Cutter and Rayek that it became a unified set-up for the ending," explained Wendy.

In addition to Wendy and Richard Pini, **Rogue's Challenge** also features contributions from John Byrne, Sarah Byam, Paul Abrams, Charles Barnett III, Paty Cockrum, and Suzanne Dechnik.

Richard Pini said, "**Elfquest** readers have been waiting a long time for Book Nine, which is to say, the volume that would pick up the action from the **Kings of the Broken Wheel** collection that we published two years ago. **Rogue's Challenge** is it. We still intend to release 'stand-alone' volumes such as **Hidden Years** and **New Blood**, but **Elfquest** as a comic book series, and the collections that that spawns, are here to stay."

WORDS & PICTURES MUSEUM NEWS

HEAVY METAL NIGHTMARE: THE ART OF RICHARD CORBEN

Words & Pictures Museum of Fine Sequential Art opened its newest exhibit February 1, 1994-- **Heavy Metal Nightmare: The Art of Richard Corben**.

Corben has tackled everything from traditional black and white sequential art to sculpture and fantasy paintings in his career. His comic book work first became widely known through the Underground comix of the 1970's, often self publishing his work. It was during this period that he created the post-Apocalyptic landscape peculiar to much of his finest work, (*Rowlf*, 1970). Then came the animated feature *Heavy Metal: The Movie* in 1981. Here his ongoing saga of the adventurer, Den, with the voice provided by John Candy, became one of the features. Corben continued to do a great deal of work for **Heavy Metal** both with the continuation of the saga of *Den* and with stunning full color cover paintings. Perhaps his most widely recognized work, and one of his favorites, is the cover for the Meatloaf album, *Bat Out of Hell*. Having produced work for publications as varied as the newsstand horror magazines, **Creepy, Eerie** and **Vampirella** to covers for Doubleday science-fiction titles to **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**, he returned in the early 1980's to self-publishing.

The Words & Pictures Museum exhibit showcases an unprecedented collection of his work, past and recent. Widely recognized by artists and fans alike for his use of color, which is nothing short of magnificent, Corben has always had a style that is truly his own. The Museum's lower galleries will feature several short stories and a number of unforgettable paintings, each canvas a mixture of oils, acrylics, airbrush and Magic Markers. The upper gallery of the Museum will be reserved for a mature audience, showcasing the wildly impossible adventures and anatomies of his oversexed heroes, heroines and monsters.

The Art of Richard Corben will be on exhibit until April 16, 1994.

NEW PUBLISHER SPOTLIGHT

PROMETHEAN STUDIOS

New to the shelves starting in Spring 1994, Promethean Studios will be presenting readers with an array of new titles and talent. Kicking off the Promethean line will be two titles appearing in the Spring.

First is **Immortal Three**, featuring three immortals in 1998. One is the superhero; one a despotic ruler; the other a respected artist, philosopher, and figurehead king of Tunisia. Once pals, now bitter enemies.

The other Spring release will be **SOB: Special Operations Branch**. This is an ensemble book starring a group of paranormals working for the Department of Defense. The series deals with tough issues while pulling no punches.

Promethean then returns with their Summer 1994 debuts; two more titles to tantalize fandom.

One is **Avatars**, featuring a team of paranormals who are brought together to fight a single foe... only to realize their true enemy is much harder to identify.

Also set for Summer debut is **The Tap**, telling the tale of a mother who tries to save her world while trying to bring back the son she loves.

Promethean Studios is a collection of independent studios working together on comic books intended for the older reader. Some of their members include:

VINCE STONE, who is best known for Marvel's **Captain Confederacy** series. He is doing lettering and covers on most of their books.

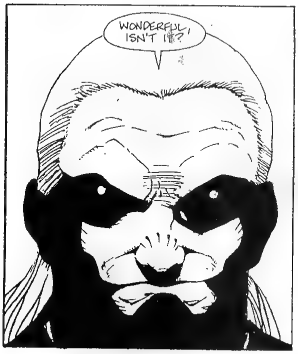
BRAD GARNEAU, who was an intern at Marvel and recently did work for Arrow Comics. He is pencilling the **SOB** ongoing series.

STEVE MONEY, who did pencils for Eternity's **Darkwolf #1-4** and assorted assignments for Artline Studios. He is pencilling the **Immortal Three** series.

BILL NICHOLS, who has inked a number of titles from Sky Comics, including Tom and Mary Bierbaums' **Dead Kid**. He is inking the **Immortal Three** series.

DALE INGRAM, who is a hot new talent, fresh to the comics industry. He is pencilling the **Avatars** finite series.

Promethean Studios looks to be a possible new haven for good stories and worthwhile artistry. Look for it soon!



"Our titles are aimed squarely at the older comic book reader," The books have all of the elements a comic book should have-- action, drama, character development, and interesting stories. We offer more than a simple slugfest. As publisher/creator of Promethean Studios, I'm trying to bring back to comics what used to make them entertaining for me. I believe there is a market for books driven by story, not by gimmicks."-- Publisher Phil Adams

An Interview with KELLEY JONES

by Paul Birch

***Paul H. Birch**: You started off on Marvel's **Micronauts** series, first as inker then penciller.*

Kelley Jones: I had an aptitude for it but it wasn't really what I wanted to do. There was just no horror comics, nor psychological stuff, and that's where I wanted to go.

I became frustrated with Marvel. The bottom line was that it was hard to find inkers who were willing to put as much work into it as I was, that and the powers that be at the time didn't care for the book; Although it was selling fairly well, they wanted to make room for the New Universe.

***PB**: Their financial mistake! So along with Peter Gillis you did **Crome** for Hot Comics.*

KJ: I've always been pleased with **Chrome** because it was very close to what I tried to do at Marvel and didn't get a chance to show.

***PB**: But you continued to ink books like **Corum** and **Manhunter**. How did the **Deadman** job come about?*

KJ: Editor Barbara Kesel thought of me as an inker, but Sam (Kieth) told her I pencilled as well. She saw my work on **Chrome** and needed somebody to do these eight pagers in **Action Comics** which wasn't selling well.

Mike Baron didn't know I was getting the assignment. I turned in the first three which he then saw and decided he'd like to do a graphic novel. I'd changed Deadman's look without telling anyone: No one was interested in him at that point, it was being published to maintain copyright. I made him sort of gross, made of dead things or holocaust looking. At the time Mike was getting away from him being a punning kind of character, and I thought there'd be issues like alcohol and drug abuse that would show on him. In the sequel he went off the deep end and had a breakdown.

Deadman was appealing because it was a way to do something which was very personal, I don't mean autobiographical, but we could throw in all this stuff about characters having relationships. People can relate to that, they've all been through bad relationships. You put the monsters in to sell to the editors, either that or for the sheer enjoyment of it. I think all good work comes across like that.

***PB**: You flitted between several books for a while.*

KJ: Harder to fit than a moving target! *(Laughs)* It's funny you do a job and immediately you get typecast. **Sandman**'s a very restrained book, quiet and subtle, and I wanted to do something the same month like **Grimjack** and be fairly loud and over the top.

The reason I think I pick horror in general is there's more range, more octaves to play in, more twists and turns. And as an artist you get to express yourself more.

***PB**: What about **Batman & Dracula: Red Rain** written by Doug Moench?*

KJ: I had to prove I could do my version of Batman; by trying to do something valid without any gimmickry. Originally I didn't know it was going to be so expensive. To have it sell out within about three days was a shock!

***PB**: I particularly enjoyed your work on **Aliens: Hive**. It's definitely horror, but it's understated.*

KJ: I don't put a lot of gore in. On **Aliens** I had maybe 6 or 7 panels that were nasty. I believe you get a much better reaction to those than if you had every panel with lots of blood everywhere. You become desensitised. When I pick up something like that, instinct determines how much you giftwrap it. I mean it's a long joke to tell and hopefully they'll laugh; and I want it to keep growing, getting louder and louder.

***PB**: That's what attracted you to the series?*

KJ: With this one it wasn't just a body count, and it wasn't you waiting for the monster to come out and do something horrible to someone you didn't really care about anyway. I looked at the films more than anything. The first one is a rape film, the second's a motherhood film. In **Hive** it's a relationship story. It's basically about this old guy and this young girl, and whether he believes her. What are her true feelings for him? Is she really in love with this man? Everyone can identify with the turmoil he's in. We've all had these desperate and confusing feelings.

Jerry Prosser (the writer) wanted it to be about characters and make it work on true abilities, not scary monsters. I think he's got a great future. Again it was Barbara Kesel who called me about doing it; She sent me the scripts and when I read through them there was everything in it for me. All the way through he would not refer to the death count or other stereotypes, and that made it very believable.

It was one of those assignments where you don't lose steam and have still got a little *'umph* 'towards the end because of the kick of the ending. I really felt that Jerry himself reinvigorated that whole thing. He brought it back to what it was about; that something so nightmarish could exist in a world that is also filled with good things.

***PB**: How would you describe your own work?*

KJ: I think I'm hard to peg– I'm on the fence. One of those conundrums where I'm a popular horror artist and that seems to weird. When I came in and did **Swamp Thing** and **Sandman** and stuff like that, I would spend as much time as I could developing these skills that I'd learned from watching all these Hammer and Universal films. And there was a whole new audience out there who hadn't seen it done to that degree of care.

I took a great effort in first of all stylising myself, and secondly doing very mundane things and bringing some little eccentricity to them to hopefully make them interesting. I've always said it's a lot harder to have a guy sitting in bed smoking a cigarette flicking through the TV channels with a narrative describing what's going on, than to have two guys slugging it out in space.

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MOTOR CITY COMIC CON TO HOLD CHARITY AUCTION TO BENEFIT MDA.

The Motor City Comic Con, Michigan's largest comic book convention, which will be held on March 25-27, 1994 announced that it will hold an auction to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The auction will be held on Saturday afternoon, March 26.

"This will be our first charity auction, and are very pleased to be associated with an organization like MDA. We are hoping to make this an annual event," says Michael Goldman, the Convention Coordinator.

They also announced the signing of WDZR (Z-Rock) Radio as a sponsor of the convention. Z-Rock will be conducting a variety of on-air giveaways and promotions, as well as broadcasting live from the convention on Saturday March 26. The goal of the promoters is to reach new people who have never been to a comic convention. Z-Rock is the #1 rated radio station in Detroit.

As previously announced the Motor City Comic Con will move to the Novi Expo Center, in Novi, Michigan (suburban Detroit), for the convention scheduled to take place on March 25-27, 1994. The convention will utilize up to 104,000 square feet of the one year old Expo Center. This will allow, for the first time in five years, the addition of an expanded publisher area as well as room for more exhibitors and guests.

Most major publishers are expected to attend. Already confirmed are Anubis Press, Axis Comics, Blackmore Publishing, Boneyard Press, Caliber Press, CFD Productions, Dagger Comics, DC Comics, Hero Illustrated, HyperJump Comics, Image Comics, Lazer Comics, Lightning Comics, Limited Treasured Editions, Majestic Entertainment, Marvel Comics, NOW Comics, RAK Graphics, Sanctuary Press, Sky Comics, Upper Deck and Valiant Comics.

Over 200 professional guests will also attend the con. The guest list includes Joe Quesada, Jim Palmiotti, John Byrne, Howard Chaykin, David Dorman, Steven D. Grant, Lurene Haines, Bob Hickey, Adam Hughes, Todd Johnson, Rick Leonardi, Bill Messner-Loebs, Brian Murray, Joe Martin, Ken Mitchroney, Sheldon Moldoff, Martin Nodell, John Ostrander, George Perez, Brandon Peterson, Don Rosa, Javier Saltares, Larry Stroman and Bernie Wrightson.

The Con will also celebrate the 30th anniversary of the world's first comic book convention, held in Detroit, Michigan in 1964. It also marks the 5th anniversary of the Motor City Comic Con. Programming will feature panels reflecting on the history of comics fandom in America and its deep roots in the Detroit area.

Other programming includes: film previews; an amateur art contest; an animation festival (sponsored by ANIME Club of Michigan); a costume contest; video game competitions; the CompuServe Comics Forum Awards; the Hero Illustrated/ Electronic Gaming Monthly Super Tour and special presentations by today's top publishers.

This will be one of the largest ocmic book conventions ever held in the United States with an anticipated attendance of 8,000-10,000.

LOU BANK NAMED VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING AND SALES FOR DARK HORSE COMICS

Lou Bank has been named Dark Horse Comics' new vice president of marketing and sales, as announced by Mike Richardson, the company's founder, publisher, and president.

Bank is well known in the industry for his six and a half years at Marvel Comics where he rose to the title of director of sales. While there, he spent four and a half years working very closely with the former head of that department, Carol Kalish. Prior to his years at Marvel, Bank worked in the comics field in variuos retail- and distribution-related posi-

tions. Most recently, Bank was focusing his efforts on Marvel's UK operation.

"I've always had a great deal of respect for Lou and have enjoyed our competitive relationship down through the years," Mike Richardson commented. "I can't express how pleased we are to welcome him aboard here at Dark Horse, and I am certain he is going to prove to be a fantastic addition to our already great team of comics professionals."

Bank is scheduled to begin working from the company's headquarters in Milwaukie, Oregon in early Feburary. His first official duties, however, will take him to the IADD conference a few weeks earlier being held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on the weekend of January 23-25.

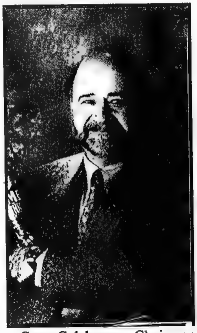
"I am very excited to be joining Dark Horse," Bank commented. "I feel the company is very much the way Marvel was when I joined it those many years ago. It's a smaller, more closely knit team."

Bank added, "Considering the already strong relationships I have with Mike Richardson, Neil Hankerson, David Scroggy, Bob Schreck, and Jerry Prosser, I'm certain I'll be able to hit the ground running, so to speak, and get a great deal accomplished in a relatively short amount of time!"

"Lou brings with him an enormous amount of knowledge and expertise," Richardson concluded, "an we're excited about all of the ways he will further the growth of Dark Horse Comics, not only within the direct sales market, but in the development of new markets as well."

CLASSICS INTERNATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT, INC., AMERICA'S FIRST PUBLICLY TRADED COMIC BOOK STORE COMPANY, MAKES MAJOR ACQUISTITIONS IN MIDWEST

Geoffery Talbot, President and CEO of Classics International Entertainment, Inc., announced that the company has entered into a letter of intent to acquire Moondog's, Inc., a chain of five comic book and pop culture stores located throughout the Chicagoland area.



Gary Colabuono, Chairman of Moondog's, will join Classics International as Executive Vice President, and will be reporting directly to the Chairman's office to, among other things, assist in Classics International's future development activities. The management team of Moondog's will remain in place. Closing, which is expected on or before March 31, 1994, is subject to a Definitive Agreement and the approval of Classics International's board of directors. Financial terms of the transactions have not been disclosed.

With seven Dream Factory stores in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey, and four more under construction, Classics International already controls one of the largest comic book store chains in the eastern United States. It is now moving quickly to create the biggest chain in the Midwest. In addition to the five Moondog's stores in Chicago, the company plans to open five additional Dream Factory stores in the Cleveland area by the end of the first quarter of 1994.

Commenting on thw acquisition, Mr. Talbot states, "This was a very strategic purchase for us. Now is the time to push forward because the comic book industry is in a state of flux. New publishers are taking the market by storm and the established system of distribution is being challenged. As a growing player in the industry, we are developing the resources to guide these changes for the greatest possible benefit for our shareholders, our customers, and the industry in general."

According to Talbot, one of the added benefits of the deal for Classics International is acquiring the talent of Moondog's founder, Gary Colabuono. "We are thrilled to have Gary as part of our team. Not only is he recognized as one of the nation's leading authorities on collectibles, he also is on the cutting edge of major changes in the comic business. Gary will help us identify new opportunities for Classics International within the comic book industry."

Gary Colabuono founded Moondog's, Inc., in 1978, and brought comics to the mainstream with one of the most influential chains of comic book and popular culture stores in

America. Moondog's is also the wholesaler of the nation's leading brand of comic book storage bag. Colabuono is also president and CEO of the nation's fastest growing comic book convention, The Chicago Comicon, producer of the nation's first comic book radio show, *Moondog's Pop Culture Radio Hour*, founder of the industry's most influential retail organization, The Direct Line Group, and special advisor to the nation's leading comci book price guide publications. He has been recognized with many of the industry's most distinguished awards, including the first-ever "Will Eisner Spirit of Comics Retailing Award" in 1993.

VALIANT TO CAST SHADOWMAN AT CAPITAL CITY DISTRIBUTION RETAILER CONFERENCE

Bob Hall, writer and artist of **Shadowman**, will be Valiant's guest at the 1994 Capital City Distribution Retailer Conference in St. Louis, May 1-3.

"The list of noted comic book writers and artists who will be at the Retailer Conference continues to grow and grow," says Connie Woolpert Koury, vice president of sales and marketing for Capital City Distribution. "Pretty soon, it's going to read like a "Who's Who" of comics."

Hall recently signed a two year contract with Valiant, ensuring that he will continue writing and drawing **Shadowman**, the New Orleans musician with mysterious powers of the night.

Shadowman, which Hall began writing with issue #6 and pencilling with issue #9, is one of Valiant's strongest titles.

CAPITAL CITY DISTRIBUTION AND DC COMICS PREPARE SPRING AD BLITZ

Captial City Distribution and DC Comics are teaming up for a spring ad campaign to encourage new customers and expand business for comic book retailers.

Plans include a television commercial which will air exclusively on cable's *Sci-Fi Channel* and an advertisement in **TV Guide.**

The campaign will promote comic book stores in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, St. Louis, San Francisco and Washington, DC.

"Participating in this innovative media package is a great way for retailers to bring new customers through their doors," says Connie Woolpert Koury, vice president of sales and marketing for Capital City Distribution.

The ads will feature an 800 number directing consumers to local comic book stores that feature DC Comics. Anyone who mentions the name of an operator from the 800 number at a participating store will receive a complimentary DC comic book.

CAPITAL CITY DISTRIBUTION RELEASES STAR WARES CATALOG

To help comic shop owners take advantage of the popularity of the Star Trek phenomenon, Capital City Distribution has published a catalog devoted exclusively to Star Trek merchandise. The aptly-named **Star**

Wares catalog will be included in the April consumer and retailer editions of **Advance Comics.**

"This is an attempt to provide retailers with timely, convenient and repeated access to what is the most ubiquitous and profitable sideline in comic book shops around the world," says Connie Woolpert Koury, vice president of sales and marketing for Capital City Distribution.

The catalog's key innovation is its reusability. Capital City Distribution urges retailers and consumers to hold on to their **Star Wares** catalogs...and not just for reordering. The company plans to resolicit for all available **Star Wares** items on a 3-4 month cycle. Thus, in the July or August **Advance Comics Orderbook** and **Orderpak**, the listings will appear again, along with new items that have become available in the interim.

New products will be described in supplementary **Star Wares** catalog sheets, but the catalog itself will not be reprinted until an entirely new version is prepared in early 1995.

Star Wares is stuffed with books, comic book trade publications, games, cards, videos and novelties. Whole sections are devoted to toys, PVC figures, crystal and pewter items, autographed photo plaques, models, t-shirts, and lifesize standees. "It's no wonder we refer to this book as a Trekker's trove filled with Force," said Koury.

DEFIANT INDUSTRY NEWS

Defiant was so pleased with the fan interaction with *The Good Guys Casting Call Contest* that they decided to do another one. This time, it's The Bad Guys they're looking for, and they're going to choose one Bad Guy from among fans 16 and older, and one from among comic book retailers. The prize is $1,000 cash for each winner, and each winner's name and likeness will be created into a villain that will die a terrible death in an upcoming issue of **The Good Guys.**

Scheduled to begin in March, Defiant will be producing a newsletter for fans and retailers. They haven't yet decided what to call the newletter, but regardless, they say it should offer an insider's view of some of the goings-on at Defiant.

Jim Shooter will be conducting quite a few of his "How to Create Comics" seminars in the upcoming months. He is doing one at the end of January at Seattle's Golden Age Collectibles; in February, at New York City's Great Eastern convention, as well as the University of Oklahoma; one in March at Golden Apple Comics in Los Angeles; one in April at San Francisco's Golden Gate Park; and one this summer during the Chicago ComicCon.

In February, Defiant started a new advertising campaign comprised of advertorials. They will be drawn by David Lapham in comic book style format. Each page (probably four per month) will take place in Jim's office during an editorial meeting. The regular cast of (real-life) characters who normally attend these meetings will be there: Jim Shooter, Editorial Director Deborah Purcell, Creative Director Janet "JJ" Jackson and Associate Editor Ed Polgardy. Each episode will have a guest appearance by one of the Defiant artists/creators of someone from the Defiant staff. The editorial content of these advertorials will be actual scenes from the meetings that Jim and his staff have with the artists,

writers and creators of their titles.

Defiant's PR firm, the Newlin company, has gotten national media attention for Defiant, Jim, and the comic book industry as a whole. So far there have been articles in **New York Magazine, Sports Illustrated, Forbes, New York Times, New York Daily News** and various other newspapers, and it won't stop there. Currently Defiant has invited senior editors from, among others, **Cosmopolitan** and **First for Women** to sit in on the early development of their fall launch of **Glory**, a spin-off of **Warriors of Plasm** featuring the character of Louise Johnson (aka Mrs. J). This title will be a traditional Jim Shooter superhero book that the typical male-dominated readership can easily share with their girlfriends, sisters, etc. Defiant hopes that this national exposure in mainstream women's publications will bring more women into your stores and expand the comic book market.

Sometime in 1994, Jim will team up with Rob Liefeld to write one of perhaps a few issues of **Youngblood**. Contrary to some bizarre rumors, Jim is not leaving Defiant to join Extreme (or any other company, for that matter). As Jim states, "The only way I can get fired from Defiant is if I fire myself, and somehow I can't imagine doing that."

CHAOS! COMIC NOMINATED BY DIAMOND AS NEW PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR!

Chaos! Comics, based out of Toluca Lake, California was started on a lick, a promise and a couple of bucks. Both of its new series **Evil Ernie: Resurrection** and **Lady Death** were met with an enthusiastic response by retailers and readers alike. Now it seems as if the fledgling company's hard work throughout 1993 has paid off.

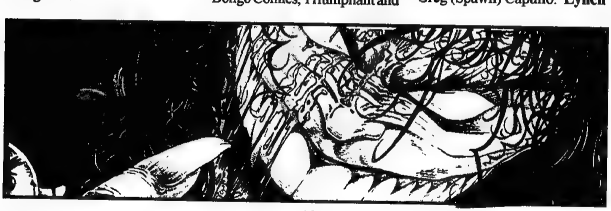
Diamond Comic Distributors has completed their list of nominations for the 4th Annual Diamond Gem awards, recognizing publishers and manufacturers for their achievements during 1993 and Chaos! Comics has been nominated as "New Publisher of the Year."

The competition for new publisher of the year is fierce. The other nominees are Defiant, Bongo Comics, Triumphant and Warrior. "We are happy to be included among these fine publishers," Pulido says. "Defiant and the others are well capitalized companies with abundant resources. We take our nomination as a sign that a lot of hard work and dedication to quality comics pays off."

Chaos! Comics aren't resting on their laurels, however. "We are looking to improve constantly," says Vice President Francisca Pulido. "We are printing our books at Ronalds Printing which will improve our on time record and reduce the possibility of damages. We are committing to exact release dates as we list our products. Our dedication to good stories, wonderful art work, high production values and the top new talent remains the same."

Chaos! will next venture into superhero comics this June. According to Pulido, "We are known for cutting edge action/horror, but we've loved superheroes since we were kids. We will be doing heroes, but it will be Chaos!-style. They won't be your little brother's superheroes."

The first all ages release will be **Lynch Mob** by Pulido, Roman Morales III and Leonardo Jimenez, featuring a cover by Greg (Spawn) Capullo. **Lynch**



Mob #1 will ship June 21, 1994 from Ronalds.

DARK HORSE FEATURED ON *ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT*

Dark Horse Comics was recently recognized by the nationally syndicated television program *Entertainment Tonight* with a feature story on December 30, 1993. Co-host Leanza Cornett described Dark Horse as "just about the hottest comic book enterprise going."

The segment focused on the tremendous growth of the comics industry over the past few decades and, more specifically, Dark Horse's recent conversions of comic books into movies, and vice-versa. "Everyone in movies want to get into comics, and everyone in comics wants to get into movies," stated Dark Horse president Mike Richardson.

ET previewed a few recent examples including the Dark Horse comic, **The Mask**, scheduled to make its move to the silver screen this summer. *The Mask* stars Jim Carrey, the man of a million faces from TV's In *Living Color*, whose character receives special superpowers from wearing a mysterious green mask. The segment offered a sneak peek at some of the special effects from the movie which were created by George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic, the same SFX technology used in *Jurassic Park*. "They took my face and did some stuff with it that was unbelievable," said Carrey. "It was a dream!"

Actor Jean-Claude Van Damme was interviewed regarding his role in the forthcoming feature film *Time Cop*, based on the Dark Horse character who travels through time to enforce justice. "It's intelligent. It's the first time I've gotten a very smart story. I'm very pleased," professed VanDamme.

ET emphasized Dark Horse's involvement with bringing major motion picture properties to comics. The segment highlighted comicbook licenses held by Dark Horse including **Star Wars, Indiana Jones, RoboCop, Godzilla, Aliens** and **Predator**.

The *ET* cameras also looked at the new *Comics From Spike* imprint, an all-new line of comics published by Dark Horse in conjunction with movie mogul Spike Lee. Both **Floaters** and the new anthology **Colors in Black** were featured.

HEROES CONVENTION TO BE A FULL HOUSE

DC Comics, Diamond, Hero Illustrated, Harris, Image, Marvel, SkyBox, Upper Deck, Valiant, Wizard and others are heading to Charolette, North Carolina on June 17 through the 19. That's when Shelton Drum is holding the 1994 Heroes Convention, the summer's first major consumer comics convention and the largest in the Southeast.

Known for its southern flavor, the 1994 Heroes Convention is expected to draw 8,000 comics fans this year. That's twice as many as last year, and more than any other time in the 11-year history of the convention.

"We've gotten early commitments from some of the strongest leaders in the industry," Drum said. "The list just keeps growing."

That's no problem for the 60,000 square feet of display space he's booked in a plush convention center in the heart of downtown Charlotte. Among the top creators committed to appear during the show are Dave Dorman, Joe Jusko, George Perez, Joe Quesada, John Romita, Jr., Bone creator Jeff Smith, Brian Stelfreeze and Jim Valentino.

"The Heroes Convention is a great way to spend Father's Day weekend," said Drum, whose own father has made a tradition of carving a ham at the convention. Father's Day will be the convention's major theme, Drum said, in addition to its usual old-fashioned family style.

Those attending can expect a full slate of programming, giveaways, trivia contests, famous character appearances, an ice cream party for fans, and parties for adults in the evening--not to mention a room full of exhibitors and comic book dealers.

Exhibitors, dealers, and fans who buy a plane ticket to come to the Heroes Convention will receive a 10% discount if they fly USAir and mention the Heroes Convention reference number: 85960028.

THE GAMER'S REVIEW

GURPS: VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE

by Dan Harbison

The publication of the **Vampire the Masquerade** supplement for the **GURPS (Generic Universal Role Playing System)** game system marks the marriage of the two best and most innovative role-playing systems on the market. The supplement is available from Steve Jackson Games for $19.95 at your local role playing game supplier, and is fully authorized by White Wolf Games.

Vampire the Masquerade hit the role-playing world a few years ago like a storm. The system stressed true role-playing over the more traditional rules oriented roll-playing. It gave the player and the game master a chance to develop and design their characters and campaigns the way they wanted. The system relied as heavily on the players as the game master to develop the overall *feel* of a campaign, and it was this approach that made the system so popular.

GURPS is the ultimate expression of a design your own campaign game. It is set up to give the players and the gamemaster a chance to create *any* setting or type of game desired. Not only could a single system be used to run a fantasy, science fiction, or super based game, but it could be fine tuned by the players and the game master as to exactly how realistic or cinematic they wanted it to be. The system is designed to be simple and adaptable to any *world* or *universe* the players want to adventure in, without having to learn a whole new game every time they change campaigns or gaming genres.

GURPS: Vampire the Masquerade succeeds in preserving the best parts of both systems, and manages to enhance them simultaneously. **Vampire the Masquerade** gains the flexibility of **GURPS** while preserving its own unique style and feel. **GURPS** gains a valuable supplement to any ot its other world books, and really for the first time, the vampires in the game [*forgive the pun*] have some real bite.

The supplement allows the player to constructr a character in the world of the Camarilla and Sabat while using the **GURPS** system. The advantages and skills that exist in the **GURPS Basic Set 3rd Edition** make the need for the Merits and Flaws system from **Vampire the Masquerade Players Guide** unnecessary. Those that are not covered under the normal advantages and disadvantages from the basic set get a short explanation in this supplement.

The supplement is careful to maintain all the little pieces of information about the unlife of the Kindred and their underground society that make the **VTM** game so captivating. Not only is this information retained, but the unique method of presenting in the form of quotes, song lyrics and letters from those *in the know* is also preserved.

The people at Steve Jackson Games have succeeded in removing the only real detractor from the White Wolf version of the game. They have organized the supplement into a coherent

order that doesn't leave the player and the game master hunting all over the book for pieces of related information necessary for play.

Much of the art from the White Wolf Game has been used in the **GURPS** version and the new stuff is of similar if not better quality. The illustrations in general enhance the atmosphere of the game, and give the reader as much insight into the world of the Kindred as the text.

The author manages to convert the Disciplines and Thaumaturgical magical system from **VTM** to **GURPS** in a coherent manner that not only retains its recognizability, but actually interacts with their magic and psionic systems in a balanced and simple process. A person could literally look at a **GURPS** or **VTM** character sheet and directly convert one to the other without the aid of any complicated charts. The few charts that are used in the chapter on conversions are simple and are all less than ten entries long.

The biggest advantage to this supplement is that it allows players and game masters to take their **VTM** campaigns into new and uncharted directions with a minimum of fuss over how to do it in the White Wolf system. There is already a way to do it in the many available **GURPS** world books.

There is a better than average adventure supplied in the publication that could be used as the basis for an on-going campaign or as a one shot affair. It is titled **Mortal Desires** and has lots of opportunity for good role-playing designed into it. As a matter of the fact, the adventure *requires* it solve the mystery.

GURPS Horror players and game masters should be aware, however, that if they want to use this in an existing campaign, the suggested point level of beginning Kindred characters is between 200 and 300 points with up to 60 points of disadvantages. This would make the weakest vampire more than a match for any normal 100 point PC. Adjustments would need to be made in some campaigns.

Vampire the Masquerade players should be aware that this supplement does not stand on its own and the **GURPS Basic Set 3rd Edition** is required to run or play it. The supplement was designed after all to allow **GURPS** players to adventure in the world of the Kindred via their favorite game system.

The supplement as a whole works well. The two systems have a lot in common with each other and with this venture those similarities are strengthened. Players from both systems will want this publication to expand and complement their own campaigns and the side-bars on pages 144-46 make plenty of suggestions for developing the world of the Camarilla in other genres.

Vampire the Masquerade fans will find that Steve Jackson Games has done an excellent job in converting their favorite game into the **GURPS** system. Those players familiar with the **GURPS** should find the conversion useful and an excellent addition to any campaign where a vampire character could work. This could be just what a floundering or too-familiar campaign need to rejuvenate it. After all let's not forget what happened when the failing **Dark Shadows** soap opera introduced the character of Barnabas Collins.

GAMING SPOTLIGHT ON:

Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

MAGIC: THE GATHERING CARD TAMPERING

During the winter Wizards of the Coast listened to numerous concerns regarding customers who purchased **Magic** decks that were short one or more cards. At first they figured it was the fault of the manufacturer, Carta Mundi, but several things seemed suspicious. First, this would often happen with every deck in an entire display box; Carta Mundi explained that it's possible to have a series of decks with common or uncommon cards instead of rares if someone put the wrong cards into the wrong feeder, or that there might be isolated instances of one or two missing cards if the conveyer belt was stopped and then started back up again improperly, but to have a whole string of consecutive decks that are completely missing cards is "impossible." Of course Wizards of the Coast was also skeptical of Carta Mundi's explanation since the results could not be refuted. Another thing that was suspicious was that it was always rare cards that were missing, but they thought that maybe nobody bothered to report it when it when it was the common ones that were missing.

Then Wizards of the Coast were contacted by one retailer who had purchased 80 decks and the first 30 he opened were missing rare cards. Since Wizards of the Coast had never actually opened a deck with missing rare cards they traded the retailer 50 new decks for the 50 he didn't want to sell because of the missing rares. These decks have been examined closely and they have discovered several interesting facts. The decks they opened indeed were missing rare cards, and they have saved several decks so that they can open them in front of people to illuminate this point. Two of the people who were present at the opening of these decks were the president and vice president of Carta Mundi. One of the interesting points of these decks were that they were shrinkwrapped differently than the way any of the other decks they had seen. This seemed suspicious to Wizards of the Coast and when they showed the decks to Carta Mundi, Carta Mundi assured them that there is no way their shrinkwrapping machine could have shrinkwrapped the decks in the way these were. They are currently preparing an affidavit to that effect. Wizards of the Coast are also preparing to do lab analysis on this shrinkwrap material and the material Carta Mundi uses to see if there are microscopic differences the human eye could not detect.

The only logical conclusion is that someone between Carta Mundi and the retailers is tampering with the cards. We have conducted experiments which show how this could happen without damaging the packaging so that such tampering would not be detectable to most people. Wizards of the Coast are taking steps to make sure that this isn't happening unbeknownst to them in their own warehousing facility, and they asked that other distributors double check the security at their warehousing facilities to make sure it's not happening at their sites either.

CHARITY FELLOWSHIP'S POSTERS AND CATALOGS

Lately Wizards of the Coast has been receiving calls from consumers, retailers and distributors regarding a set of posters that have been released through Chessex. Most want to know where they can get a set and some are upset that the posters were exclusively released through one distributor. In general, all want to know the story behind how they came into existence.

It is not Wizards of the Coast's

intention to go into the lengthy details about what transpired between them and David Moore of The Charity Fellowship. However, it is our intention that the basics be understood so that no, or as little as possible, misconceptions take place.

The Charity Fellowship developed the posters believing they had the rights to do so. When Wizards of the Coast found out about them, the posters were already being printed. In addition, The Charity Fellowship had already talked over a deal with Chessex to have them distributed. Chessex informed Wizards of the Coast of the situation before they actually signed any contracts with the Fellowship.

Wizards of the Coast thought long and hard about the poster. The bottom line was that even though they did not want the posters printed or distributed it was not in their best interests to interfere with the situation to any great extent. They founded Wizards of the Coast, Inc. on a platform of industry support and non-aggression. They simply could not begin the year by mucking up their progress with any kind of legal murkiness involving a non-profit organization.

That was a difficult step to take. Although they were not going to be the kind of company that wanders around taking legal action against people, they must difend the use of their trademarks and ideas. With this in mind, Wizards of the Coast formed a licensing agreement with The Charity Fellowship that severly limits any kind of activity involving any of their products and trademarks in the future, while allowing them to do what they had already done with the posters. It is Wizards of the Coast's opinion that this was the most non-aggressive road to take in this situation.

It is Wizards of the Coast's policy to avoid exclusivities and they will continue to do so. This situation regarding the posters and Chessex is an exception to the rule. They do not intend to makr future exceptions.

WIZARDS OF THE COAST, INC. AND IRON CROWN ENTERPRISES ANNOUNCE MIDDLE-EARTH DECKMASTER LICENSE

Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and Iron Crown Enterprises have agreed to produce a Middle-Earth Deckmaster game to be released late 1994 or early 1995. Under this international licensing agreement, Wizards of the Coasts will develop a collectible trading card game set in Middle-Earth, the fantasy world of JRR Tolkien's classic novel, **The Hobbit** and **The Lord of the Rings** trilogy.

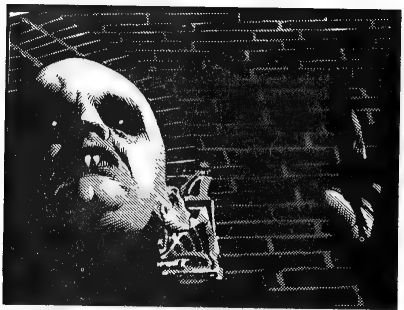
Iron Crown Enterprises owns the exclusive rights to produce game products based on the Tolkien books and the world of Middle-Earth. Iron Crown publishes **The Lord of the Rings Adventure Game** and the **Middle-Earth Role Playing Game**, which has recently seen a second edition hardback book in print.

Wizards of the Coast is the publisher of the popular **Magic: The Gathering** collectible trading card game which has sold almost forty million cards in four months.

Wizards of the Coast has announced that the designers of **Magic: The Gathering** will be working on the **Middle-Earth Deckmaster** cards. No details on the design of this game have been released yet.

WIZARDS OF THE COAST, INC. AND GARFIELD GAMES ANNOUNCE MERGER

Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and Garfield Games, Inc. announced that Garfield Games has formally merged into Wizards of the Coast, Inc. The two companies have collabortated on the popular collectible trading card game, **Magic: The Gathering**. Both Boards of Directors felt that combining the companies would allow them to more vigorously develop their mutual interest in the collectible trading



card field. All intellectual properties, assets and debts of Garfield Games were assumed by Wizards of the Coast, effective December 30th, 1993.

WIZARDS OF THE COAST, INC. AND WHITE WOLF, INC. SIGN AGREEMENT FOR VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE DECKMASTER GAME

Today, representatives of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and White Wolf, Inc. signed an agreement that will allow Wizards of the Coast to produce a Deckmaster game based on White Wolf's popular **Vampire: The Masquerade Storytelling** system. On hand for Wizards of the Coast were Peter D. Adkinson, Lisa Stevens, Jesper Myrfors, and Victor K. Wertz, while White Wolf was represented by Richard Thomas, Wes Harris, and Travis Lamar Williams. Both companies plan to work closely with each other on the design and marketing of the **Vampire: The Masquerade Deckmaster** game.

Wizards of the Coast announced that Richard Garfield, designer of **Magic: The Gathering**, will be the chief designer for the game. The game is scheduled for release in summer of 1994 to coincide with the release of the *Interview With A Vampire* movie based on the book by Anne Rice.

The premise of this game centers on two ancient vampires dueling with each other through political manipulation and multiple levels of intrigue. Set in White Wolf's **World of Darkness**, this new Deckmaster game, tentatively entitiled Jyhad, will focus on the aspects that have made White Wolf's **Vampire: The Masquerade** roleplaying game so popular. The mechanics of the game will be radically different from those in **Magic: The Gathering**, but will use the same collectible trading cards format that was established with **Magic: The Gathering**. Some of the top artists in the vampire genre have expressed interest in doing art for this series, so it should continue the tradition of high quality production that Wizards of the Coast established with **Magic: The Gathering.**

Wizards of the Coast, Inc. is a game company based in Seattle, Washington. Until this summer, Wizards of the Coast was best known for its revival of Talislanta roleplaying game and its capsystem, **The Primal Order**. In August of 1993, it released **Magic: The Gathering** to critical acclaim and staggering sales. **Magic: The Gathering** has sold 10 million cards in six weeks and carved a brand new nich in both the gaming and collectibles fields. Boosted by the sales of **Magic: The Gathering**, Wizards of the Coast plans to release more Deckmaster games and expansion sets for **Magic: The Gathering**.

White Wolf, Inc. is a game company based in Atlanta, Georgia. Formed from a merger of White Wolf Publishing and Lion Rampant in the fall of 1990, White Wolf has been a rising star in the game industry, riding the strong sales of its **Vampire: The Masquerade, Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, and now **Mage: The Ascension** storytelling games. Other products include the new series of **Mind's Eye Theatre** live games and an upcoming series of novels based on the World of Darkness setting.

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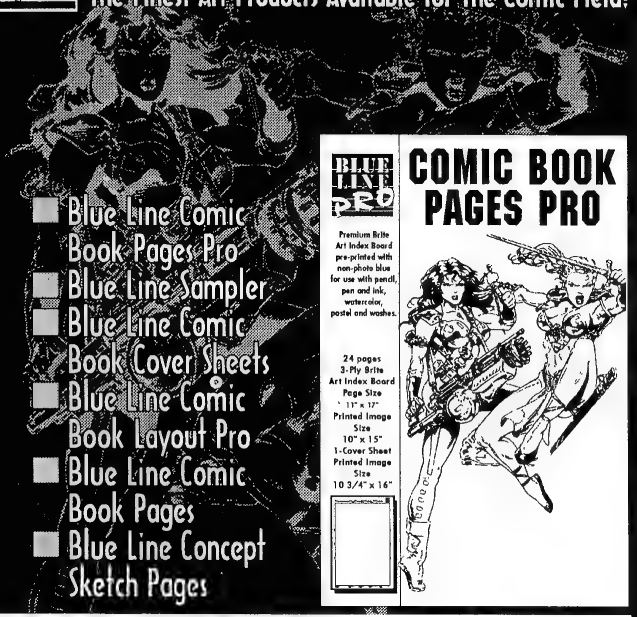

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Please add shipping and handling charges	x	
Send Orders To: Blue Line, 264 Main Street Florence, Kentucky 41042	Total	

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Capital City Distributors have recently instigated a $500 fee for late and/ or cancelled books and this has sent some smaller publishers into a furor. Here are some comments made by Caliber Press, Chaos! Comics, Boneyard Press and Heroic Publishing in regards to this.

To Whom It May Concern:

In lieu of the recent announcement from Capital City Distribution regarding late product and cancelled solicitations, Caliber Press is planning to effect its own new policy and we invite the other "small" publishers to adopt a similar system. This new policy should not be in too much conflict with any of the other policies installed by the distributors.

To have a product considered "on time," Caliber will insure that it is shipped within 45 days of receipt of the distributor's purchase order if this date exceeds the month solicited. This will, of course, stagger the dates of "on time" release to the different distributors but they essentially receive the product at the same time regardless even though there is sometimes a 20 day deiscrepancy for publishers receiving the purchase orders. I think it is generally agreed by everyone in the business that a 30 day window for product that is not "on time" is sufficient and will not adversely affect the retailers' sales so therefore, a late, non-returnable book would ship within 30 days after the initial 45 day period. After that, the product falls under the different guidelines of the distributors in whether it is acceptable with returns, non acceptable, whatever.

For example, if we offer a title for a May release and we receive the purchase order on April 15th, then the "on-time" schedule would mean the book would have to be released by the end of May. The 30 day window would allow a penalty free release by the end of June.

An additional amount of time could be installed based on the payment schedule of the distributors. If the distributor has a certain amount of time in which to pay the invoice for a specific discount, the number of days late on those invoices could be tacked onto the release date window. For example, in the above case, if the distributor is averaging a payment schedule of 15 day s later than the invoice calls for, an additional 15 days would be added onto the window, therefore making the release date good until the middle of July. If retailers and distributors insist on a tightened time schedule on release dates, then they must also adhere to a tightened payment schedule as often, this is one of the reasons books are late. Unfortunately for many smaller publishers, this will enable us to add an additional 30-90 days with some distributors.

Furthermore, in consideration that the fees put forth by Capital City are to cover the cost of additional solicitations and processing of unfulfilled orders, Caliber will install a new discount schedule. We will still give the same discount as before but we will require that distributors be limited to making a 15% profit maximum (on their top discount level) per item based on their system of determining discount. Previously, some items were carried along with a higher profit margin which could offset some of the wasted time and effort on the distributor's part but since they will no longer be absorbing the costs of that, there is no need to short discount the retailers. Whether this will be applied to all distributors will be determined by any further action on their part.

It should be obvious that the discount absorbed by some of the distributors under the pretense of giving more "support" to the books was somehow never put into action. I do want to state here that Capital has always supported Caliber Press more than any other distributor as far as coverage goes and I do think their catalog listings generally give the independents fairly good coverage. I have no complaints for the most part in that area and the lack of support is directed moreso at some of the distributors.

I do understand the problem of late books! I think, however, this policy is attacking the wrong people and this is better outlined by Peter David's column in **CBG** released at the end of January. I have often referred to this action as a placebo for the retailers who are struggling right now and being a retailer myself, I do know what they're going through. However, this is the wrong action and addresses the wrong problem of over ordering and in cases where it does apply, it adversely affects the wrong people. I don't think a $500.00 fine to Image will really factor much into their profit equation is they decide to accept Capital's terms.

I also think that retailers should really consider what possible consequences could come from the distributors' various actions. Although the profit margin is small for the large distributors on the smaller publishers and it is becoming increas-

ingly harder for smaller publishers to gain a foothold, just remember this. When the mass market does jump into the comic market in full force, they will carry only the larger publishers just as so many of the current stores do. They will be more efficient in their advertising, promotion, special events and, undoubtedly, pricing. As a retailer, what will you have to offset that? A diminishing back issue market? A pull and hold service to guarantee books that will be readily available at numerous outlets by then? Location? A friendly helpful staff to guide people to other titles that might interest them when you carry only what the major chains carry? Sure, some astute retailers will survive just as they have with the major book chains and major video chains, but you can bet that a lot won't.

As a publisher, I have been contacted by many chain stores and other outlets beyond the direct market to create product specifically for them. Undoubtedly, this has happened to other publishers as well. If the direct market wants to get rid of a lot of the smaller publishers whether by lack of interest, heavy penalities that have a much more detrimental affect on the little guys, or minimum sales that prohibit any possibility of building an audience, it is likely that many new titles will be created that may not be available to the direct market. I'll be honest and let you known that we have been involved in projects of this type but thus far, I have insisted that they be available to the direct market, but if push comes to shove and someone outside guarantees me an order of 50,000-100,000 and the direct market responds in numbers of less than 10% of that, I really don't have much choice. If the direct market closes its doors to the smaller publishers, many of us will go out of business. If the direct market closes its doors to the smaller publishers, many of us will go out of business but many will go on to other markets at the elimination of the direct market. Support has to come from two directions.

Thanks for the forum. I think 1994 will be a very interesting year. Let's just hope it's a good one for all of us... together.

Gary Reed
Publisher
Caliber Press

In one sense, it's a move in the right direction. It will force publishers, both big and small, to take more responsibility for their solicitations.

I do believe, however, that the fees are high and are sure to impact smaller publishers with greater severity than the big boys. It will make it difficult for new creators and independents to emerge who have something unique to share with the comic audience.

Hopefully with all this dialogue going on, a happy medium can be struck between Capital and the publishers.

Brian Pulido
Chaos! Comics

To Anyone Who Cares:

As of February 1st, independent comic publishers are dead.

And Capital City Distribution killed them.

Peter David wrote about the new "Capital Punishment" in one of his most recent *Oh So* columns for the **Comic's Buyers Guide**. On January 6th, buried in a packet of new information, was a policy of fining comic book companies $500 for cancelling a book and an added $750 if you want to resolicit. This was all covered in the article, what Peter missed is that this new policy is meant to be the death knell of independent comics. Everett Hartsoe, publisher of London Night Studios, phoned up Chris Blue, purchasing manager for Capital, and asked why the ax? Mr. Blue said with a smile, "To weed out the garbage." And it will. This pole axing is going to destroy the independents and isn't it convenient that the new policy will go into effect after Marvel cancels twenty or thirty of its titles.

Do you think I'm crying wolf? This is war, and you, the independent publisher and fan, are the target. If Capital gets away with this industry rape do you seriously think that Diamond Distribution will wait a heartbeat to get their pound of flesh? Think again, fan boy. These new fees are supposed to pay for their costs of cancelling a title, like it's killing them when **Dark Angel** ships a little late or **Tears II** is cancelled. We know who's responsible for putting the hurt on Capital and messing up retailer's cashflow– Image. Todd, Jim and Rob have made a mess with their bastard offspring of seven egomaniacs. Do your homework, kids, and you'll find out that Image cost Capital more money than they made them. It seems as if these morons are going to destroy the very thing they purport to love– Independence. This new penalty is a slap on the wrist to chronic offenders like them, Continuity Comics, Comico and the other kings of soliciting twenty books a month that will never come out. Is Image going to clean up the mess they've made? I doubt it; that would take courage. Balls.

What about Capital? Are they going to pay me, like Peter David suggested, for their screw ups? They're sitting on 1800 **Dahmer** comics that they ordered almost two years ago. Because they felt it was politically incorrect, they did not ship these books to the store owners who ordered them and instead told them that they never received the books– an outright lie! They tried to make me buy them back one year later! Capital did this to me again when I shipped them 400 copies of **Rectum Errrectum Halloween Fun** in October 1992. They found the cover to be too offensive for their

tastes, again, shorting their customers who ordered these books and giving no explanation why except my own (nonexistent) incompentence. I knew the cover was a little racy and tried to be a nice guy, I took them back and now they're going to give it to me in the back. This is supposed to be the company friendly to independents and adults only titles? I've never had so many problems.

We've got enough problems as it is in this industry without this. I just got done appearing on *Sally Jesse Raphael* in which the battle cry is give comics back to the kids (any of you remember what happened in the fifties with EC and the Comics Code? Well it's going to happen again). I've arguably, without killing Superman, brought more new readers into stores than any other new independent publisher. How? By going on the talk shows, by doing the crazy things corporate rectums pucker up at the idea of. Rush Limbaugh said he enjoyed and talked about the **Rush Limbaugh Must Die** comic on the air and so has Howard Stern. Their followers' curiousity will be piqued and they will go look for it. Anyone who watched me speak on *Sally Jesse Raphael* or *Jerry Springer* are more likely to waltz into a comic books store than they ever were before. But I don't know if I'm going to survive this and I've already walked the fires of hell.

The attitude of the money makers in the industry is screw the independents, who needs 'em. **YOU**, the comic buyer, needs 'em. We do the grunt work, take all the risks. You won't find any Marvel Comics at your local library or in **Time Magazine**'s literary section next to **Maus**.

There would be no Vertigo without the independents to push and build the adult audience, prove its viability to the corporate bean counters. We're in this business because we love it passionately. We work crappy day jobs and slave over the board at night. We drive to every convention we can, cars loaded with product. Without us there would be no **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Bone, Crow, Cadillacs and Dinosaurs, Cerebus, Tick** and frontier books like **Faust**.

Capital City is shooting this industry in the foot. Where will the next generation of Alan Moores, Erik Larsens, Jim Valentinos, Vincent Lockes, Simon Bisleys and Sam Kieths come from? They cut their teeth in the trenches. We'll be left with nothing but the inbred mongoloids like Stephen Platt.

Anger is a gift, use it. Store owners should write to Capital's owners, John Davis and Milton Griepp, at– Capital City Distribution, PO Box 8156, 2537 Daniels St, Madison WI, 53708. Express your dissatisfaction over the new policy of fines. It truly is up to you and the larger publishers. Will Mike Richardson remember how Dark Horse started out in the back of a comic shop? Will Dave Sim, John Byrne, Todd McFarlane and other advocates of independents flex their muscle and get something done or will they just stand idly by and watch Capital's act of sodomy. Are they going to let guys like me take all the risks (believe me, this letter is a helluva risk)? Don't be surprised when Capital stops carrying all of Boneyard Press' titles because of this letter three or four months down the road. My cry of rape is not going to sit well because they would prefer you to remain in the dark like complacent sheep. You must sit up and act. I ask John and Milton, no I demand, that they respond publicly to this base act of destruction.

I've had a lot of fun in this business, it's too bad me and the other smaller kids aren't allowed in the sand box anymore. I said it a year ago and I'll say it again– They won't take your rights away all at once... they'll do it in small pieces.

Sincerely,

Hart D. Fisher
Publisher
Boneyard Press

This has to do with the changing nature of the direct market itself. Increasingly slow payments have combined with onerous new terms of trade to create a sense among smaller publishers that we are now being unfairly asked to bear the consequences of policies which have, quite predictably, led larger publishers to engage in a systematic abuse of this non-returnable market. For the sake of perceived short-term gain, the larger direct market distributors chose to adopt flawed policies with regard to paid advertising and catalog promotion despite clear and emphatic warnings that such policies would lead inevitably to the kinds of systematic abuse we've been seeing these past few years. And now that it's all come to a head, with the market for "hot" comics collapsing overnight, it seems to us the height of hypocrisy to adopt new and restrictive policies that will have the effect of raising new and restrictive policies that will have the effect of raising new barriers to competition, thereby ironically rewarding the abusive actions of the hype-masters who caused the problem in the first place.

In light of this, the question we now have to consider is the question of in what form the direct market will survive. Changes are happening. The industry is being transformed. And if we're to be a part of the industry, we need to change with the industry.

Perhaps, in the next thirty days, we'll have a better sense of where the comic book industry is going.

Yours sincerely,

Dennis Mallonee
President
Heroic Publishing

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WHAT THE CARDS SAY

hot and new in the sets for '94

FLEER CARD NEWS

"VETERAN" AND "ROOKIE" COMIC ARTISTS TEAM UP TO CREATE 1994 FLEER ULTRA X-MEN TRADING CARDS

Imagine being able to convert a creative childhood fantasy into a fulfilling adult career. Not many people can, but for the talented and visionary group of artists responsible for creating one of the hottest new trading card lines on the market-- the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** trading cards--this dream is a reality.

Bob Budiansky, executive editor of special projects for the Marvel Entertainment Group, oversees Marvel's comic card design and art process from start to finish and is the man perhaps most responsible for the imaginative and striking look of the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** cards. As these cards were being developed, Bob assembled an eclectic mix of the most skilled and innovative "veteran" creative comic artists in the industry to bring their sense of imagination and realism to Fleer's entertainment card canvas.

In addition, in a break from comic tradition, a number of top commercial artists--"rookies," of sorts, to the field of comic art design--were brought on board to help bring a fresh perspective to the creative development of the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** trading card set.

First, the comic artists: the Hildebrandt Brothers, Bill Sienkiewicz, Glenn Fabry, Julie Bell, Dan Brereton and Jim Steranko.

The "rookie" commercial artists: Joining the veteran comic artists in the design of the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** trading cards are seven of the most talented, adaptable and visionary commercial artists in the country. Though well known in the commercial art industry for their unique style, power and individuality, the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** trading cards mark the first time that any of these artists has designed Marvel comic characters. And for several, it is the first time that they have created artwork for any comic characters.

Who are these "rookie" artists who were drafted to the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** trading card team? They include Peter Bollinger, who designed cards for Wolverine/Hellfire, Silver Samurai, Sinsear and Askani; Gary Ciccarelli (Arcade); Catherine Huerta (Ahab); Terry Britt (Nimrod); Bill Hill (Rictor and Tempo); James Sullivan (Mastermind); and Peter Scanian (Wildside).

With such an eager and talented group of commercial artists to work with, Marvel Executive Bob Budiansky took over the helm of the comic art acclimation process, providing guidance on everything from reinforcing the personalities of individual X-Men comic characters to guarging the stylistic differences between crafting comic artwork and commercial artwork. This learning process appears to have paid big dividends for Marvel, as the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** trading cards created by the "Group of Seven" commercial artists are among the most visually striking and powerful in the line.

In addition, it appears that the cards designed by these commercial artists may be a success from a collectibles as well as from an artistic perspective.

Said Lisa Weiner, product manager of Fleer, "Based on positive trade response to the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** cards, we are anxious to see whether these cards will become more collectible because they have been designed by first-time commercial artist, and if some pursue assignments in the comic book industry, their premier **Fleer Ultra X-Men** cards will certainly become hot properties."

With the **Fleer Ultra X-Men** trading cards a bonafide creative and stylistic hit, there is little doubt that the groundbreaking use of a variety of talented veteran and rookie artists-- each of whom brings unique creative backgrounds and perspectives to the drawing board-- has played a crucial role in the success of the cards.

Fleer Entertainment, a division of Fleer Corp., develops and markets new entertainment cards. Fleer Corp., a leading manufacturer of sports trading cards for baseball, basketball, football and hockey, has been part of the Marvel Entertainment Group since 1992. The Fleer Ultra brand, introduced in 1992, set new standards in the industry for premium cards.

MTV: MUSIC TELEVISION AND FLEER CORP. TO LAUNCH PREMIERE EDITION OF MTV'S BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD TRADING CARDS

MTV: Music Television and Fleer Corp., today announced plans for the development of a premiere line of **Beavis and Butt-Head** trading cards to be introduced at retail in April, 1994.

MTV's *Beavis and Butt-Head* show debuted as a regular series on MTV last March. The animated duo quickly attracted a huge following of fans who appreciated their refreshingly unfiltered adolescent take on the world. The program has spawned a best-selling book and chart-topping album, as well as cover stories in **Newsweek** and **Rolling Stone**. More recently, Marvel Comics introduced a new monthly title that rocketed right up the charts, becoming the second best-selling title for December 1993.

With MTV and Fleer Corp.'s introduction of the **Beavis and Butt-Head** trading cards, an expanded audience of teens and adults will now be able to enjoy the adolescent antics of these suburban couch potatoes. The creation of these limited edition cards represents the first joint effort between Fleer and MTV. To ensure the authenticity and consistency of MTV's *Beavis and Butt-Head* style, the original MTV animation creative team will draw and design Fleer's new trading card set.

"The success of Beavis and Butt-Head on-air as well as off, with a best selling book and album release, has made these characters a true media phenomenon," said Lisa Silfen, director of consumer products, MTV. "We believe that the translation of the characters and themes from the on-air show to a set of trading cards will make a great new product, and we look forward to looking with Fleer Corp. on the project."

Beavis and Butt-Head will be a super premium quality card. Distribution will be limited to trading card hobby shops, comic book stores and other specialty outlets starting in April, 1994. "Beavis and Butt-head licensed products are red hot and with the success of the show to date, we expect the card line to become a mainstay in the collectibles business," said Bill Jemas, Fleer's vice president, Entertainment and Business Development.

Beavis and Butt-Head was the creation of 30-year-old Mike Judge.

SKYBOX CARD NEWS

SKYBOX LAUNCHES NEW SERIES OF STAR TREK TRADING CARDS

SkyBox International, Inc., is set to launch a new multi-line series of **Star Trek** trading cards based on the hit television show, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The first series in this set, **The Episode Collection: Season One**, is scheduled for a March release.

Season One, which will lay the foundation for all future **Star Trek: The Next Generation** card series from SkyBox, will highlight all 26 episodes from the first year of the show. Over the next few years, SkyBox will release card series spotlighting the episodes from each season of the award-winning show, which is now in its seventh season.

Each series will also feature two of the show's most popular characters in two foil-stamped subsets. **Season One** will highlight Captain Jean-Luc Picard and Lieutenant Commander Data in two nine-card foil-stamped character subsets. Also included in **Season One** is a nine-card mural that forms an episodic timeline and a special production card listing the behind-the-scenes crew who created the first season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Season One contains 108 regular cards. Card images will be digitally transferred directly from actual episodic sources provided by Paramount Pictures. The first season cards will also showcase special effect images that have never before appeared in a printed format.

Eight bonus cards will be randomly inserted in a limited number of packs. Six will be foil-stamped and embossed, featuring a Tasha Yar memorial card, a Q card, a Traveler card, and three Klingon cards. Two will be animated holograms featuring Captain Picard and Commander Data.

Star Trek: The Next Generation Season One trading cards will be a premium quality set, using state-of-the-art printing technologies and UV coating on both sides. Each eight-card pack will carry a suggested retail price of $1.29.

The Emmy award-winning show is the most-watched primetime hour-long television show among males ages 18-49. *Star Trek: The Next Generation* topped *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, *60 Minutes* and *Northern Exposure* in the most recent in the most recent NTI, NAD/SNAD survey. Over one-half of the entire US population consider themselves Star Trek fans, and 99 percent of US residents have heard of Star Trek.

SkyBox International, Inc., is the exlclusive manufacturer and distributor for **Star Trek: The Next Generation** trading cards, which are produced through a partnership between SkyBox and The Paramount Licensing Group.

BATMAN HANDS OUT EXCLUSIVE CARDS AT SUPER BOWL SHOW

In a rare personal appearance, Batman loomed over the SkyBox booth at the pre-Super Bowl Coca-Cola Card Show V on January 29, and gave out prototype cards previewing the new **Batman: Saga of the Dark Knight Trading Cards** from SkyBox.

This hot prototype shows Batman above the Atlanta skyline and the Georgia Dome, and the black features the Super Bowl card show logo and information on the eagerly anticipated **Batman: Saga of the Dark Knight** trading card series from Skybox. The prototype cards feature exclusive artwork and are UV-coated on both sides and individually numbered. Only 500,000 prototypes were produced.

The new card series, to be released by SkyBox on April 6, 1994, marks the first time in 25 years the comic book character Batman has appeared on a trading card. It's the first set ever to be wholly dedicated to this popular and well-known comic book legend. Just 13,333 individually sealed and numbered cases of **Batman: Saga of the Dark Knight Trading Cards** are being produced. The series follow Batman's incarnations as the Dark Knight in *Batman: Year One* (1986) all the way through the storyline *KnightQuest* (1994).

Batman: Shadow of the Bat cover artist Brian Stelfreeze and other hot DC Comics artists (Tom Grummett, Jim Aparo, Barry Kitson, Kyle Baker, John Bolton, Graham Nolan) are creating all original and exclusive artwork for the set. Like the Super Bowl prototypes, every card is full-bleed and UV-coated on both sides. Five limited-edition bonus cards are randomly inserted in the eight-card packs. The cards are Spectra-etched, hand painted portraits of Batman by Bolton, Mark Chiarello, Dave Dorman, Stelfreeze and Phil Winslade. Cool subsets are in the works with favorite characters like Robin, Azrael, Joker and Penguin.

SkyBox debuts its new SkyDisc technology in the **Batman: Saga of the Dark Knight** card line. SkyDisc is a new kid of 3-D card on which the image actually stands up and moves. And if that's not enough, even the display cboxes in this set are collectible. Each is individually numbered and features Spectra-etched, original art by Dorman.

TOPPS CARD NEWS

FLINTSTONES MOVIE PHOTO CARDS

It's the live action movie to end all live action movies-- with appeal to fans of all ages! After 30 years as an animated institution, America's favorite Stone Age Family finally makes the big time. And, with John Goodman starring as Fred Flintstone and Rick Moranis as Barney Rubble, we do mean big time.

Steven Spielberg and Universal/MCA are pulling out all the stops on this one, and when they throw this much weight behind a film, look out! (Remember a minor hit last year called *Jurassic Park*?) Positioned as the motion picture event of the summer, the *Flintstones* is supported by $50 million in advertising and merchandising-- includes a major promotion with McDonald's and a toy line from Mattel.

Only Topps has the exclusive movie card license. Be sure to catch Flintstone fever-- Yabba Dabba Doo it!

TOPPS ANNOUNCES STAR WARS GALAXY SERIES II TRADING CARDS

When *The Empire Strikes Back* was released in 1980, most fans agreed that, although *Star Wars* was a hard act to follow, the new sequel succeeded beyond expectations.

Soon, Star Wars fans will once again see how a sequel can surpass the original when Topps releases the highly anticipated second series of **Star Wars Galaxy** trading cards this April.

"Just as *The Empire Strikes Back* was not only a sequel, but an entirely new movie with its own style and special qualities, **Series Two** is not a retread, but completely independent of **Series One**," says series editor Gary Gerani. "It offers a fresh creative experience."

Topps' first series of **Star Wars Galaxy**, issued last year, proved to be the most important trading card set of 1993, spawning a highly collectible deluxe boxed set and a runaway hit trade paperback. The series won numerous awards from distributors, trade press, and fans. Gerani believes the second series will be even more successful.

Like the first series, **Series Two** will be divided into subsets, with *New Visions*, the original art commissioned by Topps, comprising the bulk of the set. *New Visions* has been expanded from 60 cards to 70 cards with brand-new art from a totally new line-up of artists including Whilce Portacio, Jack Kirby, John Bolton, Jae Lee, Kelley Jones, Tim Truman and Dave Gibbons. "Fans will be treated to never-before-seen, newly commissioned drawings and paintings by comics greats, fan favorites and exciting newcomers," says editor Gerani.

The balance of **Series Two**

features some imaginative and exciting new subsets. One spotlights the work of legendary *Star Wars* production illustrator Ralph McQuarrie, who is preparing newly-created paintings for a book to be released in 1995. **Series Two** features a sneak preview of some of these paintings. "It was quite a coup getting this art for our series," said Gerani. "The book isn't due out until sometime next year, so this is really the first time these drawings will be seen."

In addition to the McQuarrie art, another unique subset focuses on Marvel Comics pinup art. This art, which has not been seen in 13 years, includes work by Michael Golden, John Byrne, Frank Miller, Bob Layton and others.

Other subsets include comic art produced in conjunction with Dark Horse; foreign and unpublished Star Wars poster art; and, never-before-seen art from private collections, the Kenner Toy Company, and most importantly, the archives of Lucasfilm. Searching through this material yielded rare adn extraordinary finds. Some of the most notable include: Pen drawings of Obi Wan Kenobi by Alec Guiness; Yoda oil painting by fantasy artist Michael Whelan; Serigraphy by Melanie Taylor Kent; and Collection plate art by Morgan Weistling.

Of course, chase cards are an important component of any set, and the ones in **Series Two** will provide a unique bridge to the first series. In **Series One**, Walter Simonson's six striking etched foil chase cards, placed side-by-side, formed a beautiful Star Wars panoramic scene. Fans will be pleased to know that **Galaxy Series Two** contains six all-new etched foil chase cards by Simonson featuring the villains of Star Wars– The Emperor, Jabba the Hutt, Boba Fett and other memorable fiends. Not only do these also create a six-card rogue's gallery, but when fans combine the chase cards from **Series One** with **Series Two** they'll find that the 12 cards collectively form one giant, seamless mini-poster.

Serving as a visual cornerstone for **Galaxy Series Two** is a brand-new painting rendered by renowned fantasy illustrator Boris Vallejo. Long associated with the Star Wars saga, dating back to his highly-prized "Empire" posters for Coca-Cola tie-ins, Boris' new work will be seen on card #00, the display box, and as a 17" x 22" point-of-purchase poster packed inside each shipping case.

Apart from the Topps trading card series, the Star Wars property is in the midst of a remarkable renaissance. From publishing to electronic games to toys, Star Wars products are undeniable hot. Bantam's Star Wars novel, **The Truce at Bakura**, is currently a New York Times bestseller, Dark Horse's **Tales of the Jedi** comic series is a blockbuster hit, *Super Empire Strikes Back* is one of the fastest selling titles for Super Nintendo Entertainment System, and Just Toys' bendable character figures are ringing up brisk sales at mass merchandisers nationwide. Many more new products are on the way for introduction in 1994.

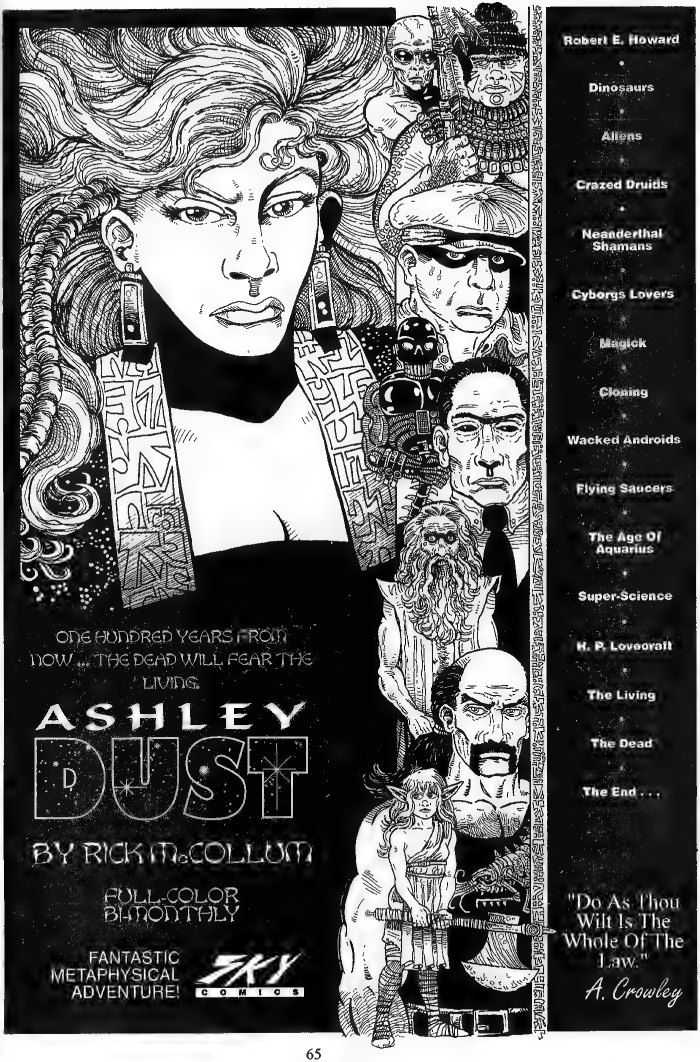
Fueling the excitement for Star Wars is creator George Lucas' recent announcement that plans are underway for more *Star Wars* movies. Scheduled for release in 1997, the next tale will take us back 40 years prior to the first *Star Wars* film. Fans will see a young Obi Wan Kenobi, along with Luke's parents, and will learn how and why Luke's father was seduced by the Dark Side and transformed into Darth Vader.

FROM ALL OF US HERE AT ARENA

TO ALL OF YOU

SO LONG, SEE YA, AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH.

SEE YA ON THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON.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The Age Of Aquarius
Super-Science
H. P. Lovecraft
The Living
The Dead
The End . . .
"Do As Thou Wilt Is The Whole Of The Law."
A. Crowley

Brit Bits

The last time I spoke to a few people from Marvel UK they kept bringing up the name of Mark Farmer. Sure they were happy as hell that Alan Davis was working for them once again, but you could tell the fact that Farmer was set to ink a variety of pieces for them meant a lot too as they could now hold up his work, and justifiably claim it the standard they now required.

Mark Farmer, who has embellished such titles as **Excalibur, Incredible Hulk, Animal Man, Alien Legion, Green Lantern** and **Batman: Full Circle**, grew up with a fondness for titles such as **Adventure Comics** when Curt Swan was drawing **The Legion of Superheroes** and commenting on such he revealed, "It was just something about his figure-work. Also I think the fact that the Legion were all kids, they were more appealing than anything else; the way they had a clubhouse and got together in a gang."

His interest in art led to him pursuing a three year graphic design course, specialising in illustration at Leicester Polytechnic, during which he latched onto the British fanzines of the day, and via **Masters of Infinity** met with another local lad, Mike Collins. "We just started touting 'round together for work; him pencilling and me putting the finish to it. And we kept on until Marvel let us in when we worked with Alan Moore on the *Dourdevils* strip." This was a parody of Frank Miller's work. "We did a few covers, a few small pieces her and there, then the Cherubim which was an offshoot from **Captain Britain** which Alan Davis pushed for us to get."

From there, the partnership of Collins and Farmer graduated to **2000AD** on *Slaine*, and the **Laser Eraser and Pressbutton** series which was published in America by Eclipse.

For Britain, the idea of splitting work into pencillers and inkers was a new concept.

"There wasn't a market as such before Mike and I went in. Though that might have changed over the years as DC came in, then later Marvel started taking British people. It was just a matter of time before a market did open for inks. Presenting ourselves together did help."

It was not long before his skills were being sought out by others.

"One day I was down the Westminster Mart talking to Brian Bolland when Dave Gibbons, who I'd seen, but never introduced myself to, cam in and said something to Mike Collins; Mike pointed to me and Dave came over in a hurry. He'd just started on **Green Lantern** but was decorating his house and taking a week's holiday so needed someone to fill in on inks for a few weeks. Of course I said Yes then didn't sleep for about three days with the excitement! If what I know now, I knew then!" he laughed. "I suppose it's just another day's business really, but then; to work for DC with Dave Gibbons on the **Green Lantern** was like a fanboy's dream come true!

"The first one had a big full page shot of Green Lantern. It was a huge figure and I had never inked with a brush. It was straight in at the deep end, there was no way I could ink a figure that big using a pen. I had to learn quickly!" He did, and continued

with the book when Joe Staton took over as penciller.

It's Gil Kane who is credited with saying the last man on the job, the inker, is the most important, and it's quite ironic as Mark explained.

"It was the last issue of **Green Lantern Corps**--to ink Gil Kane, a dream come true! It came and they were blank pieces of DC paper with photocopies of pen breakdowns traced on the back. I was told they'd be breakdowns but I didn't realise they'd be quite that bad!" he laughed. "I had to get my sister in to trace through the rough pencil outlines that were there, and sit down with a pile of Gil Kane comics in front of me, tighten up the pencils and ink them.

``So I've inked Gil Kane but I've never actually held a page of Gil Kane's pencils in my hand, if that makes any sense. I felt like I'd been taken for a suck by the editor but I've have been silly to say no to *Gil Kane*. I might never have had the chance to ink him."

Briefly discussing some of the pencillers he'd enjoyed working with, he said, "Alan Davis is always enjoyable; There's a quality in everything he does, the though process behind his work. Dave Gibbons, again is a complete professional. I inked Cam Kennedy once on **Judge Dredd** that was nice, a different style."

He first worked with the aforementioned Davis on **Captain Britain**. It's a partnership that in recent years has proved highly successful, and for the record, it should be stated that in years past, they were slated to do the then much discussed **Batman/ Judge Dredd** team-up, but by the time the publishers had come to agreements, the artists had decided to go their own way.

It should also be noted that farmer, although he downplays his worth, has actually pencilled some pretty decent pages in his time. There was some charismatic work on *Judge Anderson* for **2000AD** a few years back, and more recently he contributed a pin-up to **The Incredible Hulk Annual**.

"Every now and again, especially if I'm inking something that's not particularly well drawn-- I won't mention any names!-- I get the urge to pencil," he said. "And I'm in a situation where, to do a really good job pencilling I have to drop the inking. The trouble is, I know a good pencilling job when I see it now having worked with people like Alan Davis, Dave Gibbons and Brian Bolland who do immaculate pencils. I'm not in comics just to churn pages out. I want to get a buzz from what I'm doing as much as possible." And pencillers know this, it's why people of Alan Davis' calibre choose to work with Mark Farmer, for when he comes to each new page, he brings forth his considerable skills and enthusiasm.

HIT or Miss
by Dennis Feeback

This column is brought to you by a reader much like yourself. I go to the comic store every week to pick up my books, and have no corporate sponsorship. So I can bring you what you want out of a review... the TRUTH! I shoot from the hip, and a book is graded on one thing: my gut instinct. That means TOTAL HONESTY and nothing else. Let's begin...

CHARLEMAGNE#0 [Defiant]

(included in **Hero #7**)
(Shooter/ Pollina/ Witherby)

This eight page preview does little more than whet my appetite. The mystery surrounding the main character, which seems to be the focus of this book, doesn't amount to much being as you can piece a lot of it together by reading this. It goes something like this... a child, now in the body of an adult, takes on a powerful villain who has started a child-slavery ring. Our hero obviously prospers, but to what avail? Oh well, I'm sure more will be revealed in the first issue. There's enough here to bring me back for the first issue.

ZOMBIE WARS: EARTH MUST BE DESTROYED #3 [Fantaco]

$2.95

To start this off, let me say that I'm the biggest zombie fan in the world. Really! Ask my friends, they're damn tired of watching *Dawn of the Dead*. When I head for my lazerdisc player, they run. That said, on to the review...

THIS SUCKS!!!

All right, let me compose myself. Now I realize this is the middle of the story, but the damn recap should at least give you a vague idea of what's going on. And also, in a zombie book, is it too much to expect a few zombies? All the ones in this piece of garbage are robots! What?! I don't get it. I don't want superheroes, ninjas, or aliens. I want *zombies*; flesh-eating zombies that raise hell. Damn it! Is that too much to ask from a zombie book? It must! Possibly there is an unwritten law stating that all zombie books be crap. Maybe someday... *someday...*

SUPREME #10 [Image]

$1.95

(Liefeld/ Murray/ Hathaway)

This issue was bâled to be the definitive look at Supreme's past. Well, we got it all right, but is it definitive? Uh... no! The supposed "origin" *borrows* from everything from **Captain America** to **Maximortal**. Does Rob-buddy think we don't read other comics? That's very pretentious on his part, not to mention a little stupid. The Extreme titles have taken a giant leap in quality lately, and it's a damn shame that they had to fall back on this crap. If you want a decent Extreme book, check out **Prophet** or **Bloodstrike**. Better luck next time.

PROPHET #3 [Image]

$1.95

(Liefeld/ Panosian/ Winn)

Ah, this is more like it! This kind of quality is what I have come to expect from Extreme. While the basic plot is nothing revolutionary, the book is a lot of fun. The creators obviously enjoy this project and it shows. Plus Prophet's religious background is a very refreshing twist. It helps define the character and gives him life. The most enjoyable thing about this book is that the situations don't swallow the character; Prophet is strong enought to shine through, and that alone makes this book shine. Great job, guys!

DARK DOMINION #4 [Defiant]

$2.50

(Shooter, Jackson, Nutman/ Adlard/ Wilson)

I really loved the first three issues of this title. But after reading this issue I'm starting to wonder if this shouldn't have been a 3-issue mini. There doesn't seem to be much of a direction to go in. This plot, for example, felt forced and thus wasn't very enjoyable. Then again, three writers might have something to do with that. The story was brought to a satisfying conclusion last issue. The question to be asked is "Now what?" Let's introduce a new villain! Yeah, yeah! And how 'bout a **Plasm** crossover? Yeah, yeah! They'll buy it. I'm sure they will! *Lord help us.* **DD** had better find its direction pretty quick or it will find its future very dark indeed...

LATHE #1 [Sky]

$2.95

(Brennan/ Paul)

When I first picked up **Lathe**, I thought, "What the hell is this?" Well, I was pleasantly surprised to find one of the most refreshing and original titles in a long time. The story involves an alien artifact that has been mysteriously entrusted to a teenager. The aliens destroy planets just to gain technology and this time is no different. The lad hooks up with a band of resistance fighters in order to combat this menace. Special thanks to Sky Comics for discovering this great little gem. Don't let these guys get away after the initial 3-issue mini. MORE! MORE! Where's #2? Hurry!

PRINCE VANDAL #3 [Triumphant]

$2.50

(Dallas and Riley/ Gallant/ Pasqual)

I don't even begin to get it...

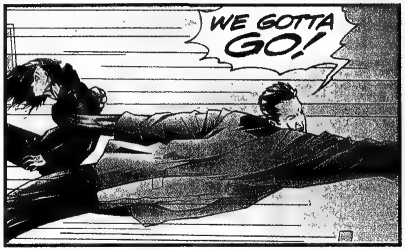
FREEX #7 [Ultraverse]

$1.95

(Jones/ Herrera/ Christian)

This issue begins the much welcome looks into the characters' pasts. We begin with Pressure, the resident bad girl of the group. Her story, while stereotypical, was well written and moving, giving us much insight into how she ticks. The Ultraverse books are always a great read and this issue is no exception. I'm looking forward to the rest of the origins and whatever else the title has to throw at us. A good, solid read.

And to end this column on a solemn note, I just found out that Jack Kirby died recently. My local paper had little to say about this unfortunate loss. Not even telling how or when he passed away. This is a crushing loss to the industry, and to the world as well. There will never be as creative a mind in the field again. The King is dead, long live the King. We'll miss you, Jack, for a long, long time.



Mister Top Ten's TOP 10 FAVORITE reads

by Scott Pierce

For the past few issues of Arena, I've been writing my monthly top ten list (thanks Mr. Letterman). I've tried to focus on the comical side of the industry or for that matter, the world. For this issue, I have selected the top ten comic book reads of all time. This was incredibly difficult to narrow down, but these are some of my favorite comic stories ever. All of these are comics or miniseries that can still be picked up at reasonable prices a your local comic shop. I've excluded those series that are ongoing because the focus should be on one particular story or story arc and because some people don't want to commit to another monthly book if they really like the story. Some of these issues you might already have. Some you might never have heard of. For those who like to read their comics instead of collect them, these might be for you.

10. FALCON miniseries, *Marvel Comics*: I can hear you already. You're saying I'm a fool. Who in their right mind would recommend the **Falcon**? Well, this just happens to be one of the best miniseries of all time. There's no foilogram cover with glossy card stock pages. This is pure sweat-and-guts comic book storytelling. This is the story for those who have grown weary of the cosmic, alternate reality, "I can destroy your planet with but a thought" plotlines. The story is based in Harlem as the Falcon tries to make a difference in the lives of some youth gang members who have kidnapped the President, believe it or not. The Sentinels and Electro show up to make things a little bit more interesting. Jim Owsley wrote a story that emphasizes the problem with gang violence and, for young Paul Smith, his first Marvel work as an artist. You can pick up the whole series for about $3.50, and it is well worth it!

9. LEGENDS miniseries, *DC*: Darkseid has given up on the notion of eliminating the Earth's heroes and has targeted their reputations. John Ostrander and John Byrne bring us the story of the lengths Darkseid will go to defeat his enemies. Glorious Godfrey, a minion of Darkseid with the ability to subconsciously influence minds, has been sent to wage a crusade against costumed super beings. This story shows us the reason we all look to heroes and how they become legendary, almost mythical. The entire world has been turned against super heroes except the children, who come to the rescue when they're most needed. This series spun off into other series, but can be fully enjoyed by itself. Ostrander and Byrne have created a masterpiece that comic readers will always remember. This story is available in trade paper back as well as miniseries.

8. THE TICK (any issue), *New England Comics*: This is the comic for those readers who like a little bit of humor to their comics. This comic offers much more than a little humor as it is the most hilarious comic book I have ever read or ever will read. The Tick's origin isn't fully revealed, but he has shown incredible strength and he is nigh-invulnerable. He trashes entire legions of ninja and still has time

for the ladies. The Tick is accompanied by his sidekick, the Moth, who with each issue, keeps shrinking. The reader has to pay close attention to each issue because vital information is sometimes hidden in the background or in crowds of people. Look for very Monty Python-ish humor along with hundreds of sight gags. Since the Tick began in 1988, it is only on issue 12, so there are numerous reprints still available. If you just pick up one issue, you'll be hooked. I started with issue 12 and just had to get them all. So go and get a Tick today and you'll be laughing tonight, tomorrow and the all next week.

7. SQUADRON SUPREME maxiseries, *Marvel Comics*: This series could be subtitled, "A Year in the Life of a Super Team." This is perhaps the most realistic superhero story ever told if there was such a thing. The reader is taken through an entire year with a group of superheroes that are determined to use their powers to bring about a global Utopia, where firearms are illegal and criminals are reprogrammed to become good citizens. Right away, a few members leave because they are against the idea. The series almost becomes a comic book soap opera. Heroes turn into villains. Villains turn into the most unexpected heroes. Characters are born. Heroes die at the hands of former teammates. Some fall in love. Some fall out of love. This 12 issue series has it all. The entire series can still be picked up for less than $1.00 per issue. If you are tired of the same flawed and clawed characters month after month, try a book that was put out when comics were more than a gimmick.

6. SAVAGE DRAGON miniseries, *Image Comics*: How can this be? An Image book in the top ten comic reads? All Image books are based solely on flash and hype? **Wrong!** Erik Larsen has created quite a jewel with his addition to the Image universe, Dragon. Most of you have read, heard about or seen this book, but many still haven't read the miniseries that lead up to the regular series. Whereas most of the founding Image creators decided to make team books or complicated storylines, Erik decided to take a different approach. He focused on one character and one story. Dragon was found in a burning crater and adopted by the Chicago police department. He remembers nothing about his past before his fiery discovery by the police. With the ever-growing list of super freak crimes going over the top, the Chicago police department decides to make Dragon a police officer to battle the freaks. It also has the first appearances of Superpatriot and Star, who gets his own miniseries later in 94. This comic contains elements of storytelling that have been absent from most Image books, namely plot, sub-plot, characterization and fun. The miniseries is available in trade paperback with extra pages added to help flesh out certain areas and a sketchbook of character designs. I've already gotten several people hooked on this book by lending out my TPB. I just don't know who has it now!

5. MACHINE MAN miniseries, *Marvel Comics*: Don't remember this, huh? This book was put out with little or no hype at all, yet is one terrific story. Machine Man, who came out around the same time as Rom and the Micronauts, has been taken apart and reassembled in the year 2020 by a young group of renegades. This book is full of action and humor. Add to that the unmistakable, kick-butt art of everybody's favorite three name artist, Barry Windsor-Smith, and you have a complete package suitable for even the most picky comic reader. Most people know what the Marvel Universe is like in 2099. The year 2020 is significant for two reasons. The first is that I should live to see it and second, a future project featuring the Iron Man of 2020 is in the works, and this is his first appearance. This series goes to show that even the worst characters can be done well with the right combination of creators.

4. X-O MANOWAR #14&15, *Valiant*: I initially wanted to include only those comics whose run has ended and is readily avaiable, but I had to make an exception. These two issues were my introduction into the world of Valiant comics and have made a lasting impression on me. X-O and Turok fight side by side against the Mon-Ark and his dinosaur legion. On one hand you have X-O, a newly civilized barbarian in a suit of alien armor. On the other hand, you have Native American Turok, the former Son of Stone turned Dinosaur Hunter. The combination is both deadly and fun. The interaction between the two seems so natural, like they've know each other for years. I've always liked

duo books rather than team books, and this is certainly no exception. Top off this great storyline with outstanding artwork from rarely seen mega-talent Bart Sears and you have the making of a comic to be reckoned with. You don't necessarily have to have any prior knowledge of the Valiant Universe to like these books. You just have to like a good story with bundles of action and humor tempered with a heaping dose of mega-art. I've already read these books a half dozen times and just talking about them makes me want to read them again.

3. X-MEN/ TEEN TITANS crossover, *Marvel and DC*: Who would have ever thought it possible that Marvel and DC could pull off such a success with an intercompany crossover. This prestige format book teams up the ever nasty Darkseid with Dark Phoenix? Yes, that's right. She's back, and the Titans are out to put a stop to her before they run into the X-Men. This book was particularly important for me because at the time, these were my two favorite books. Deathstroke the Terminator also stars as he is matched up with Wolverine in an all too brief battle. Walt Simonson's artwork played a big part in this book's success. Unlike most intercompany crossovers, the interaction between the two groups seems genuine and flows smoothly and most of all, it's believable. The only problem I have in recommending this book is it's availability. I haven't seen one in years. If you can find one, buy it!

2. FANTASTIC FOUR#285, *Marvel*: What in blazes is an FF issue doing in my top ten list? The answer is simple. This is the single most compelling and powerful story that has ever appeared in one comic. What makes this all the more strange is that it was part of the ill-fated *Secret Wars 2*. The media has taken quite a drumming for their choice on content over the last few months. Anything from house fires to earthquakes have been blamed on *Beavis and Butt-head*. Gang violence has been attributed to gun play on television. So what kind of effect do you think a super hero would have on America's youth. What would happen if a lonely boy whose whole life was based on **Fantastic Four** comics and his hero, Human Torch, decided he wanted to be just like him? This is a touching and sad story that really brings out the point of why people need heroes and how important they can be in our lives. Most readers will think of the revamping of the X-Men when John Byrne is mentioned. The first thing I think of is this issue. Just like White Castles, this story will stay with you for a long time.

1. THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, *DC*: This is Frank Miller at his best, period. This series completely redefined Batman forever. The caped crusader was grittier and more menacing in the years after this epic. I would go so far as to say DC's popularity in the mid 80's could be attributed to this book. There had never been a comic like this. So much information was packed into each and every page, the reader couldn't just sit down and skim through it. This is meat and potatoes comics at it's finest. What will Batman be doing at age 50? If you guessed soaking up the irradiated sunlight on Daytona Beach, you're dead wrong. He's still fighting crime in Gotham as if he was a teenager. The world has become a darker place and Bruce Wayne has changed with the times. The story was written during the Reagan-Cold War years and has a serious undertone of imminent doom. The story isn't just about Batman. It's about super heroes in general and how the public and society in general thinks about them. Superman has been turned into a patriotic governmental flunky who has fallen under the spell of the President's charm. When Batman gains the unwanted attention of the President, he becomes the target of the Man of Steel, something both men knew would happen eventually. All of this comes under the threat of a full-scale nuclear war. This book packs as much tension per page as it does art. This book is a sphincter factor of ten. This series is most affordable in trade paperback format. I recommend you sit down for about two hours

and read it from cover to cover. This is as engrossing of a read as you will ever find.

These were the top ten comic stories I could think of. I'm sure there are others that were worthy of mention, I just couldn't remember all of them. Does this list sound accurate to you? Did I completely omit something incredible? Was there something that had no right to be in the list? Write in and let me know. Every person who writes in and gives me their top ten comic reads list will be eligible for a prize. I'm not sure what it is yet, but you can be sure I'll make it something well worth the stamp you put on the letter.

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raiden and gato's

CYBERSENSE VIDEO GAME REVIEW

Welcome, welcome, welcome...

This is the first installment of the soon-to-be infamous *Cybersense*, a video game and system review column dedicated to one thing... **Honesty**. Other mags might not bring you accurate information or consistent reviews, but we promise to bring you, our readers, nothing but the truth on all the video game market has to offer.

You see, we're just like you... Hardcore game fans. We know the agony of seeing a glowing five star review in a mag, going to purchase that five star game, one to find out that it was a five star fumble. Well, not here, game fans. We will offer you brutally honest, accurate reviews and information. We don't have a high-powered corporate family to feed, so we don't care what we say. If the game bites, then that's what we're going to tell you. However, unlike other magazines, we're going to let you know in detail why it bites.

Cybersense takes no prisoners, so we can offer our readers the attention they deserve... we promise.

This month we will bring you the gritty on what we feel is the rising star of game systems, the new Atari Jaguar. So get yourself a plate of cookies, a glass of milk, and lend an eye, as our two gamemeisters Raiden and Gato lay it out for you.

ATARI JAGUAR

Raiden: I must admit that this system is a real welcome surprise; Way to go, Atari!!! The thing looked so tame and gentle sitting there on the table... until you plug the **Cybermorph** cart (cartridge; included with the system) into that little slot in top. Damn, what a system!!!

I put over 100 hours into **Cybermorph** before I got to the end. All I can say is Jaguar is doing on carts what other systems still can't do on bloody CDs, and for $249.95, you can't do any better. I can't wait for the Jaguar CD to hit later this year. Take my advice and pick up the Jaguar, it's money well spent.

Gato: The Atari Jaguar; 64-bits of pure adrenaline. Yes, the system of the future has arrived and it rocks!! Of course, the only true test for the new hardware is its software and if the pack-in game, **Cybermorph**, is any indication then we're in for one hell of a ride! With the best yet to come, the Jag is an absolute steal at only $249.95. Welcome back, Atari; we've definitely missed you...

HARDCORE REVIEW: CYBERMORPH (ATARI JAGUAR)

Raiden: If the Almighty played video games, he would love **Cybermorph**. With at least 54 boards (that I've found so far) and tons of action, **Cybermorph** will keep you happy for weeks. For a cart, this game is incredible! You are the brave pilot of the Hi-Tech T-Griffon attack fighter. You have at your disposal an arsenal of weapons, ranging from ariel mines and air-to-ground cruise missles, to triple-shot lasercannons and plasma-flame ejectors. You visit each of the 54+ planets to retrieve valuable pods for the war effort against the Pernetia, bent on galactic conquest. Only the morphing T-Griffon, with you as its pilot, can take on the hundreds of enemy craft, and solve the mindjolting puzzles that stand in the way of victory for the forces of good.

One great thing about this cart, is the ability to go wherever you want at anytime on the surface of the planets. Unlike games such as **Starfox**, you are not locked into one specific flight path at set speeds. You may fly the T-Griffon at any speed, in any direction, at any altitude. (However, the craft does have a flight ceiling). So if you fail to clear a planet, go back and try a new strategy. It's different each time and the scenarios are endless. This combined with no time limit makes playing **Cybermorph** an addictive experience. As for quality of graphics and sound, the sound effects are sharp and clear, while Skylar (your on board computer) speaks in crisp understandable tones.

I do wish, however, that the game had more music. The theme at the intro screen was good enough to make me want more. I've heard complaints about the graphics from other people, maybe they just never stopped to look at those backgrounds or the smooth execution of the onscreen animation. Try spinning the T-Griffon in a stationary circle; look at how the shading from the planet's

sun smoothly glides over your ship. That detail appears on most all the structures and craft in the game.

You won't find slowdown, drop-out, or fading in **Cybermorph** either. I was attacked by about a *zillion* pirate ships all firing missiles and the screen never even blinked.

Play control takes a little (just a little) getting used to, but the perfectly shaped Jaguar gamepad makes it a breeze. All in all, **Cybermorph** is a first rate cart...

SFH: ★★★★★
MUSIC: ★★★★3/4
GRAPHICS: ★★★★★
PLAY CONTROL: ★★★★★3/4
ATTENTION: ★★★★3/4
OVERALL: ★★★★★3/4

STATE OF THE UNION

HAUNTING (EA FOR THE SEGA GENESIS)

SFH: ★★★
MUSIC: ★★★★
GRAPHICS: ★★★★ 3/4
PLAY CONTROL: ★★★★3/4
ATTENTION: ★★★★★3/4
OVERALL: ★★★★1/2

To start, let me say that I think the Sega Genesis is an inferior system. It can't compare to other systems in terms of graphics, sound, and game play. Now, here's the good news; I've found one of the rare games that doesn't depend on any of the above. **The Haunting** is a great little game. The premise is simple: possess furniture and other inanimate objects around a house in order to run out its occupants. In later levels, you can even acquire hilarious spells to help you out in your goal. The goopy, gory side effects of your spree ensure that this title will never show up on the SNES. My only complaint about this little gem is it's length; I beat it in only a few hours! However, the new and original game play make up for it. Rent this pup, but please don't buy...

MEGA MAN X (CAPCOM FOR SNES)

SFH: ★★★ 1/2
MUSIC: ★★★ 1/2
GRAPHICS: ★★★★
PLAY CONTROL: ★★★ 1/2
ATTENTION: ★★ 1/2
OVERALL: ★★★★

The infamous Mega Man has taken a bold step, the leap to 16-bit. How does our hero fare? Well, he seems to have left something behind in 8-bit land: THE FUN. The play control is sloppy, the slow down is horrendous. (The screen comes to a complete stop at times, for pete's sake. C'mon, Capcom!), and regenerating characters (which come back every time you reenter a screen) continue to take away from what could have been a great game. Keep dropping the ball Capcom, and I will not be there to pick it up. Better luck next time, pal...

KING OF THE MONSTERS II: THE NEXT THING (SNK FOR NEO-GEO)

SFH: ★★★★
MUSIC: ★★★1/2
GRAPHICS: ★★★★
PLAY CONTROL: ★★3/4
ATTENTION: ★★★★1/2
TOTAL: ★★★3/4

KOTM2 corrects all of the problems from the first game; all but one, that is: the play control still lacks. Throws, especially, still seem inconstant. Also, your monster's blows seem to take different amounts of damage depending on who's ahead. Other than that, **KOTM2** is a really fun game that shines through the graphics and sounds. The monsters' growls are especially well done. The frustrating game control actually helps that attention factor, as you start to convince yourself that you must be better than the machine. The game is truly a mixed bag, but entertaining nonetheless.

CYBERMORPH (ATD FOR JAGUAR)

SFH: ★★★★ 1/2
MUSIC: ★★★★
GRAPHICS: ★★★★ 1/2
PLAY CONTROL: ★★★★3/4
ATTENTION: ★★★★★
TOTAL: ★★★★1/2

There's not much I can add to the Mighty Raiden's missive, other than to back up the greatness of this incredible game. The game, giving you a true feeling of 360 playing, is so much more than we've been offered before. There simply hasn't been a game this revolutionary in a long, long time. Bravo, Atari!

MASTERMIND
by Raiden

LEVEL CODES AND POWER-UPS
for
Cybermorph/ Atari Jaguar

Here are the level codes for the awesome **Cybermorph**:

Level 1: 1008
Level 2: 1328
Level 3: 9325
Level 4: 9226
Level 5: 3444

There is also a Power-Up planet, where you can get four extra men and all of your weapons powered up. When you get to the Planet Select Screen, type 6009 on your keypad. You will see a set of four planets. Pick the one in the lower right corner... *BINGO!* Power-Up Heaven! After collecting your goodies, you will leave the planet and go back to the Planet Select Screen. *DON'T* pick any of the other three planets; they're traps. Simply enter the code for the set of planets you're on, and you're ready to rock and roll.

In case you want to know how I found this code: On the first level of planets, you'll see one named CODEX. (I know, I know... *DUH!* Right?) Anyway, enter that planet. When your ship sets down and stops, turn to the right. You'll see a pod right there, and to your right you'll see a long mountainside. Go straight. You'll fly through a pass that goes on for awhile. Just follow alongside this mountainside, keeping it always to your right. After weaving for awhile, you'll see in front of you an opening in the cliff at a high altitude. Go through this opening. You will know be on the inside of a huge crater. Now turn right and fly along through the middle of the crater. You will see what looks like roads on the crater floor. These *roads* make up the shapes of numbers: 6-0-0-9. There you have it, fans.

SOUND TEST FOR NEO-GEO!

for Fatal Fury Special/ SNK Neo-Geo

There is a hidden sound test for **Fatal Fury Special**. To do this, play a match like normal, but as the match starts, after "FIGHT" is said) hit pause. Now on Controller One, hit these buttons in this order... A-B-C-D-A. Now you will see "Sound Test" on the center of your screen. A button plays the sound; C,D selects the first two digits; up,down selects the last two. When you have found the music for the boards, (0023-0048) you can listen to any music you like while you play. Just select the music you prefer, and unpause the game. Fight to your favorite tunes...

KILLER CODE OF THE MONTH...

Play as RYO on Fatal Fury Special!

You must have a memory card to do this trick. All you do is get to Ryo, beat him, then at the save game screen say yes. Okay. Now, reset the game and say yes when the load game screen comes up. You will fight Ryo again. You must lose to him; don't continue and when the save game screen comes up say no. The game will go back to the title screen. Don't hit a button until the demo fight starts. When the demo fight begins, do a 360 degree circle on the first controller starting in the up position. Do this circle in a *counter-clockwise* direction and hit A. Then do a *clockwise* circle and hit C. If done properly, you will hear Ryo's challenge. Sorta like "A-ooa ooa." Now hit start. Select player 1 vs. player 2. Pick your skill level, and when to you get to the character select screen, you will see Ryo right beside Krauser. As of now, this code only works in two player mode. However, when we get an update we'll let you know. Good luck, and have fun...

DIGITAL DAWN: Things to Come...

There's much news to end our first installment of CyberSense. First up, Neo-Geo news. Chad Okada over at SNK has a lot to share with us this time. Fighting fans get happy! A flood of hot fighters are on the way. They are: **Art of Fighting II** (in arcades now!), **World Heroes II Jet** (with two new characters, faster game play, and a ton of new moves!), **King of Fighters '94** (formally called **The Survivor**). This hot game features characters from **Fatal Fury**, **Samurai Showdown**, **World Heroes**, and **Art of Fighting**.. All Chad would tell us is that there are more than twenty fighters! Also on the way are **Fatal Fury III**. Being as **Fatal Fury Special** is my favorite game, this is a welcome surprise. The game is to be based on the animated films now playing in Japan, and also to be aired he in the states by Saban this summer on independent stations (*YAY! YAY! YAY!*). Also in the works is **Samurai Showdown II**, of which we have no details at this time.

To end our first column Raiden and I would like to thank Chad "The Game Lord" Okada at SNK, and Lynn Thompson of Atari's PR for all the help in getting CyberSense off the ground. Your kindness and understanding were beyond the call of duty. Thank you!

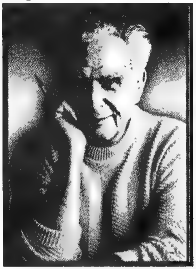
BOOK REVIEW: The Art of Jack Kirby

THE ART OF JACK KIRBY
A Book Review
By
Robert J. Sodaro

On February 6th of this year, we lost a legend. I won't presume to eulogize Jack Kirby, as there are those who are far better equipped than I to do so. To be sure, I am almost embarrassed to admit that Kirby was never a major influence of mine--I was more fond of Steve Ditko's **Spider-Man** than of Kirby's **FF**. Further (perhaps because I am a writer rather than an artist), I attribute my love of this medium more to Stan Lee than to Jack Kirby. Still, later on in life, the name Kirby was enough to attract me to his various projects, **Jimmy Olsen** (DC), **Captain Victory** (Pacific), and most recently Topps' **Kirbyverse**.

In fact, it wasn't until I became a professional journalist in comics that I truly began to realize precisely how much Kirby had actually contributed to this field. Early in 1992 I had the unimaginable honor to interview Jack for **Wizard's Top 100 Comics**. We chatted for about a half hour and, like so many before me, I found him to be a very genial man. At that time he was ostensibly promoting his then newly-published biography, **The Art of Jack Kirby**. As I have only seen one review of this scholarly tome published to date, I persuaded the editors of **Arena** to print this review (which I had penned some time back).

We lost one of our founding fathers when Jack Kirby died. On a personal note I'm not only glad that Ray Wyman (his publisher and biographer), was able to compile this book prior to Kirby's death. I'm also glad that I had the opportunity to chat--even so briefly--with the man we call King.



Few people in this industry have been as well-respected, or have earned as many honors as has Jack "King" Kirby. Among his myriad accomplishments were the creation and/or co-creation of some of the most influential comic characters ever created, including Captain America, the Fantastic Four, The Silver Surfer, the X-Men, The Hulk, and a host of others. With the publication of **The Art of Jack Kirby** (Blue Rose Press, 1992), there is a virtually complete and total compendium of Kirby's extremely prolific 53-year career in the comicbook industry (the biography, naturally runs up to, but does not include works published after 1991's **The Art of Mickey Mouse**).

Written by Ray Wyman, Jr., with research by Wyman, Catherine Hohlfeld, and Robert C. Crane, plus a forward by Kevin Eastman, the 13" x 9 1/2" square-bound book is available in three prices and formats: softcover ($28.95); hardcover ($46.95); and signed, numbered, and never to be reprinted hardcover limited to 1,000 copies ($84.95). True to it's name, the book delivers over 120 black and white plates, with 300 color photographs, and numerous photos, and never-before published sketchbook illustrations, including several Kirby drew while in the service during W.W.II. According to publisher Wyman, this is not only the single most encyclopedic publication about Kirby, but it is the first time that such an all-inclusive undertaking ever been mounted for a single comicbook creator.

The book begins its coverage of Kirby's long career by going back to his formative years growing up on New York's Lower East Side. Based on interviews with Kirby and those who knew him best, various antidotes are related about the eventual, and undisputed King of the comics industry. One of the most humorous was one that told how Kirby vented his creative imagination on the white-washed wall of the tenement where he and his family lived, much to the dismay of Kirby's mom and the ire of the landlord.

Born August 28 1917 as Jacob Kurtzburg, he was known to his friends and family as "Jackie." He began his publishing career very early with other local kids by writing, illustrating, and publishing a newsletter entitled the **Boy's Brotherhood Republic** newspaper. Obviously a labor of love for

Wyman, the book goes into extensive detail about Kirby's life on the lower East Side; the first professional work he did as an "in-betweener" at Max Fleischer Studio on **Popeye** animated shorts; plus how he joined Fox Features, met Joe Simon, and went on to have a string of successes during the Golden age of comics. Moving gracefully through Kirby's life, Wyman talks briefly about Kirby's turn in the armed services, and his eventual return to his first love. Comics.

During the industry-wide bust of the Post War/Wertham/early Code years, Kirby still managed to survive while many of his peers had their careers tragically cut short by the crash in the market. Perhaps the most interesting to those of us who grew up during the Silver age is to read a history of Marvel Comics that isn't filtered through Stan Lee and official Marvel sources. While all kinds of recriminations and claims have been made about these years by the numerous people who were there at the time, Wyman's version (as related by Kirby) offers up a unique Yang to Lee's Ying, and strikes a new (happier) balance, never before achieved. (One can only wonder what a third take on this era from Steve Ditko's point of view would reveal).

Moving past his first run under the Marvel banner, Wyman sheds new light on Kirby's Fourth World work for DC, revealing how Kirby struck a then unheard of, and unprecedented deal with DC management that gave him creative control over the comics he was writing, drawing and editing, thus paving the way for creators for years to come. Unfortunately, The book's weakest section shoehorns all of Kirby's post Marvel work into a single chapter. This penultimate chapter covers Kirby's Fourth World, his return to Marvel, his stint with Pacific, as well as his Saturday-morning animation work.

To truly flesh out the massive volume, Wyman has included a series of appendices listing various aspects of the King's career. One appendix lists every comic in which Jack's work appeared, from his first published work in **Jumbo #1** (Sept. 1938) to his last in **The Art of Mickey Mouse** (1991). As stated, his Topps' Kirbyverse work is not included here as it didn't come to fruition until after this biography was completed. Perhaps now that the King has passed on, Wyman will initiate an up-dated version of this biography that will add this material (as well as his last original art, a Topps' Star Wars trading card for the 1994 **Star Wars Galaxy** collection), to the wealth of information already in this volume. Other appendices list characters he created or co-created (all 900+ of them), a publication timeline giving a month-by-month listing of his work in the order it appeared, an alphabetized listing of publications in which his work appeared, and even a suggested reading list of other Kirby interviews, and retrospectives. (I would add to this, **Comic Buyers' Guide** issue #s 1059 and 1060 were he was eulogized by dozens of pros, including a very informative two-part article by Mark Evanier.)

After reading Kirby's list of accomplishments, one can only sit in awe of the legacy this man has truly bestowed upon us. He produced over 20,000 pages of interior art, and more than 1,300 covers. His longest uninterrupted period of monthly publication was from July 1958 to January 1978, 19 years and 7 months. In 1962 he published 1,158 pages (his busiest year), while September of '47 (his top month), he published 142 pages. (In reference to Kirby's astounding productivity, writer/artist Mike Grell once commented that, "Jack can draw a comic while we're speaking.") Kirby was never one to let an idea get away from him, as he would recycle previously used, unused, or even unsuccessful ideas over and over (**The Challengers of the Unknown**, **The Fantastic Four**, and **The X-Men** are all based on the same team formula, while the **Kamandi** comicbook he published while at DC reused an unsuccessful newspaper strip from 1956--Kamandi of the Caves).

Few in this industry have had the depth and breadth of experience as Jack Kirby. His accomplishments range from such diverse genres as Westerns to Science Fiction, Superheroes to Crime Drama, newspaper strips to cartoon animation, and War Stories to Romance Comics (which he and then partner Joe Simon actually introduced as a sub-genre into comics with the 1947 publication of Young Romance). Few have even attempted what Kirby has accomplished, and fewer still have been as routinely successful as Kirby. Whether you are the most avid Kirby aficionado or just a casual fan, you seriously owe it to yourself to seek out and read **The Art of Jack Kirby**, especially since the King is no longer with us. The book is an eye-opening experience of the highest magnitude, and well worth the investment.

JACK KIRBY

1917-1994

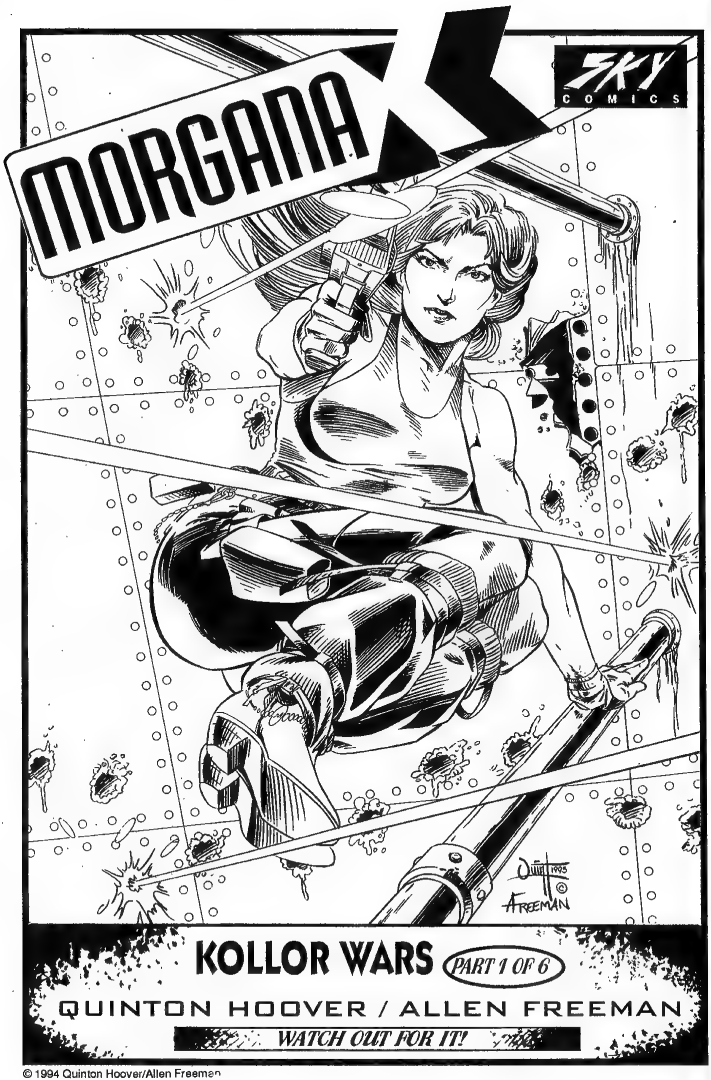
FUTURE EXCITEMENT OUTLOOK

by Steve Stegelin

Ever on the vigilant watch for new and exciting forays onto the comic racks, **Arena Magazine** stumbled upon this upcoming title, which simply looks interesting. Caliber Press, which showed the comic industry that anthology books can be cool and sell if they showcase the right talents with **Negative Burn: An Anthology**, is on the move with another book featuring a variety of talents in the comic field. **High Caliber: An Anthology of Original Visions**, a one-shot due out this summer will represent the same sort of class readers have come to expect with **Negative Burn**. Those listed to make up **High Caliber** include Nathan Pride, Lurene Haines, CD Regan, Jim Calafiore, Joe Pruett, Phillip Hester, Jim Woodyard, Mark Ricketts, Brian Michael Bendis, David Mack, Charles Yates, Kyle Garrett, Galen Showman, Brent Truax, Michael Iark, and Caliber alumni Guy Davis, Vincent Locke, and RG Taylor.

Among the stories presented are Lurene Haines' *Claire's Scar*, a tale of a man facing his erotic obsession with growing horror. Pruett, Hester, and Woodyard bring *Kilroy Is Here* to **High Caliber**, detailing a man's reaction to a mob's violent retaliation to a robbery. Brian Michael Bendis' *Borderland* looks interesting as a tormented ommercial artist on a personal surreal journey through his world of Pop and iconography. David Mack, best known for **Young Dracula** and **Happy the Clown**, introduces *Kabuki* to the comic world, in a story of high-tech espionage-- Eastern syle.

Caliber Press has, since it began publication five years ago, has proven itself a breeding ground of new and exciting talent. With **Negative Burn** it proved that it also was a place many proven and exiciting talents (such as Jeff Smith, Bob Burden, Neil Gaiman, and others) liked to visit. Any new chance for Caliber to present a handful of creators to the industry is a good one, and **High Caliber** looks to be one of the best.



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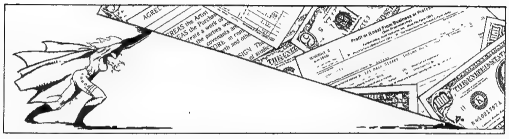

Getting Into The BUSINESS Of Comics

by Lurene Haines

Series Overview

Thank you for joining me over the past year while I took a look at the important aspects of **Getting Into The Business Of Comics**. I hope that you found some useful tips and insights to help you establish yourself as a business professional. The columns were not intended to tell you how to develop the 'talent' you need to get work, but assumed that you had reached a point where you would be considered employable by publishers in the comic industry. I simply endeavored to shed some light on a variety of the areas considered crucial for doing business in the comic industry. Or in many cases, **any** industry or business. Much of what I discussed was basic common-sense information.

To help you get a better sense of the kinds of business advice that can help you, in this final installment I offer you this comprehensive overview of the topics we've covered.

The Introduction

I started out by examining what the business of comics is all about, how the comic industry is structured, and steps to take toward becoming a business professional. I pointed out a variety of starting-out characteristics important to your success.

I pointed out that *enthusiasm is indispensable*. A sincere love and interest in what you do can inspire others to work with you - and hire you. Too much enthusiasm can be a put-off. Learn what is an acceptable balance.

Many business techniques and methods used in other jobs have great application in the comic industry. So, *bring your own work experiences with you* to the business.

Also, *don't be afraid to ask questions but also be sure to listen.* You can learn a lot from both asking questions and listening carefully. Don't be so over-confident that you miss out on opportunities!

Part 1: An Overview Of The Industry

Here we looked at how the comic industry market could best be exploited to help you develop a professional career. I explained that you need to *do research* to learn about and know your market. It is also important to *prepare an organized record* of potential employers, so you have a method of tracking samples you send out, and the responses you receive. To make your records more complete, it's important to *send for submissions guidelines* for the various companies you wish to work with. This will ensure that you follow correct procedure when submitting samples, and will improve your chances of getting work. *Research, organization* and *business procedure*; three keys to getting started.

Part 2: Preparing A Professional Portfolio

In this installment I described just what a portfolio is - as defined by our industry - and why it is important in your search for employment.

There are many different factors to keep in mind when you are preparing a professional portfolio. You must *choose a suitable type of portfolio* display case to best

suit your needs, decide whether you will *use copies or originals* in your display, include *tearsheets* or any copies of *published work* you may have done, carefully *select the right genre* of work to display (ie., superhero v. horror), decide the *number of pages* you will show, the *type of work* you want to get (ie. pencilling v. painted), and *select a layout* that most impressively displays your work.

Finally, I emphasized the importance of *sample sheets and business cards*, those little extras that show your professionalism, and give you the edge over the other newcomers.

Part 3: Approaching Potential Employers
Step One - Convention Feedback and Making Introductions

In Part Three we looked at how conventions affect approaching potential employers.

It is critical to remember the importance of *attending conventions*. When attending a convention, you will want to organize a strategy that includes *finding out the portfolio review times* and showing your work samples, getting *professional critiques* from attending creators, sitting in on *panel discussions* and checking out any *displays*. You will also want to take advantage of any specially scheduled *socializing* events such as cocktail parties, dinners, dances, award ceremonies, or other gatherings hosted by professionals that are open to both pros and convention attendees.

Conventions present you with a variety of methods for meeting possible employers, including *introducing yourself* at both the convention and any related convention social events, *showing your portfolio* to publishers, editors and creators and *using feedback* from their critiques of your work to improve your chances of gaining work in the future.

Part 4: Approaching Potential Employers
Step Two - The Mail Route

In this section we considered the various steps to take when contacting a potential employer through the mail.

Consider the *benefits of sending samples by mail*, and *which mail system* will best serve your purposes. Then you must *decide if your work is of sufficient quality* to merit consideration for employment. If you decide it is, the next step is to *familiarize yourself with the mail procedures, stock mail supplies* for making and sending sample packages, and *organize a system* for tracking the samples you send. Once this is done, your next step is to *get a copy of the submission's guidelines* for the companies you wish to approach and *decide which editor or editors to target*.

Make sure you *use the correct submissions format* depending on whether you are sending *unsolicited samples* or if you are making a *follow-up contact*. You should make sure you also include an *introductory cover letter*, a *business card*, and an *S.A.S.E. or response card*.

If you are following up on a personal contact, this should be reflected in your cover letter. *Send samples out consistently*, and with a demonstrable level of improvement each time. Keeping a regular *system of updating your samples* will allow the editors to mark the increase in your skill, as well as proving your professionalism.

Finally, *use feedback to improve your work*. Display your professionalism by applying any critical advice to your benefit, and expressing appreciation for the time taken to provide you with that feedback.

Part 5: Approaching Potential Employers
Step Three - The Personal Interview

In this section we looked at the importance of a personal interview in securing work in the industry, and compared it's advantages to other techniques for acquiring work. Then I outlined guidelines for a successful interview.

I emphasized the importance of thoroughly preparing for your interview by *having an appointment, being familiar with the company's products, learning who the people are that work for the publisher*, and *determining how (and if) your skills might fit in*.

I explained how personal appearance is also critical in an interview. *Cleanliness and neatness* are as important as a *polite and*

courteous manner. You should also fully understand the structure of an interview, and the behaviors that are considered appropriate; *punctuality, politeness, open and honest answers and listening carefully.*

Part 6: Approaching Potential Employers
Step Four - Feedback and Critiques

This section covered one of the most significant aspects of approaching potential employers; *constructive criticism from a formal critique*. It can help you as a talent, and as an aspiring professional. It enables you to pick up clues a publisher can give for gaining employ with their company.

I described the variety of places you can go to have your work critiqued including *conventions*, through *mail samples* and in *personal interviews*.

I also looked at the *characteristics of a good critique*, and described the types of *good etiquette* required of a professional when their work is being discussed.

By making the effort to apply feedback, you will demonstrate to a potential employer your ability to work as a team member and a reliable employee.

Part 7: The Legal Business of the Biz

This section was filled with much crucial material about how legal and business affairs can affect you as a professional, and how you can master these skills to improve your chances at gaining work.

There are many rules and guidelines that exist to dictate how business should be conducted in our complex industry. There are accepted, established ethical and professional guidelines available from a variety of sources. It is in the best interest of an aspiring professional to familiarize themselves with this information. Here we looked at some of the more notable business practices.

To start with, we considered *negotiations* with a potential employer to decide the terms of a mutually acceptable work agreement. I described the monumental importance of a *contract*, and the two types most prevalent in our business - *the work-for-hire agreement* and *the creator-owned rights agreement*. I also described the usefulness and restrictions inherent in *standardized forms* such as *letters of intent, bills of sale, publication reproduction permissions* and *billing invoices*.

I reviewed *copyright rules*, how this applies to *ownership of original works*, and how it affects *reproduction rights*.

I also described some examples of *licensing* and *merchandising* and how this can affect a freelancer.

Finally, and most importantly, we considered *taxes* and your responsibilities as a self-employed freelancer.

Part 8: You Got The Job
Keeping Your Humility, Pursuing More Work and Fans

Here I described how there is more to getting work than just being offered a job. Regardless of the business, employees and business people are expected to maintain certain business practices and behaviors to keep their jobs. Important skills include *social and business interactions with peers and employers, methods to follow for securing more work*, and what behavior is expected of you when *dealing with customers and fans*.

I outlined reasons why *keeping your humility* is so important. I also reviewed basic methods for securing work that could be used for *pursing more work*, including *conventions, telephone contact, personal interviews* and *related work fields*.

I also outlined some of the things a newcomer can expect from *fans*, and the best ways of dealing with some fan situations.

Part 9: You Got The Job
How To Be A Good Businessman

Under this heading, we covered how to be a good businessman, to ensure that you retain your professional status, and to better enable you to acquire more work. We looked at the four main areas that contribute to being professional - *communication, organization, financial management* and *business responsibility*.

We looked at how good *communication skills* include *making yourself available, asking questions* and *staying in touch* through a variety of means.

Good *organization* includes how to *schedule your time, organizing your files* and carefully *planning your travel.*

To ensure good *financial management,* I described how to be thorough when *setting up bookkeeping, handling taxes, invoicing, designing a working budget* and, most importantly, *keeping receipts.*

We also looked at *business responsibility* which includes *meeting your deadlines, proper handling of paperwork, keeping your work options open,* and *staying apprised of the industry.*

Part 10: Special Cases and Related Fields
or
Creators Aren't The Only Working Stiffs

In this final section of the feature, we looked at special cases and related fields of the comic industry where career and job opportunities exist outside of the freelancer arena.

I described the general structure of a publishing house, and the various jobs available therein. We looked at the responsibilities each position holds and the role they each play in creating the final product, including *the editor and publisher,* the *legal affairs department, production* jobs, *advertising and marketing, accounting and royalties, administration* and *office help.*

I also reviewed some of the other comic industry positions and their role in the business, including *distributors, retailers* and *convention organizers.*

I also described *industries related to comics,* and how they affect our business.

We also looked at the role of *unrelated fields* and how they influence the professionals in the comic industry.

To Conclude

Comics is an exciting and varied industry with many opportunities for enthusiastic and talented people. But don't be fooled by that word talent! Despite dictionary definitions and parental encouragement, talent is *not* something your simply born with, that will guide you confidently through your life and career.

Talent = hard work. It's a simple and honest formula that you should never forget.

Leave behind all your ill-founded notions about the glamour of the comics business. Forget all the hype about sales, celebrity and big bucks. Start with a solid foundation of hard work, common sense, realistic goals, personal reliability and professionalism, and you'll find yourself secure in that career position you dream about.

Start with the basics outlined in this guide but don't stop there! Read, learn, ask questions and practice. Make yourself a better creator, a better businessman. Make yourself a better person. When you do, others will recognize your expertise and abilities, and you won't have to work quite so hard at getting "your big break."

Until that time, I hope that the information I have provided in this series will give you a solid starting point. Read it carefully. Re-read it. Then put it into practice. And before you know it you'll find yourself Getting Into The Business Of Comics! Good Luck!!

If you have questions about topics that have been covered by this column, please feel free to write. I will try to answer your questions by a personal note. Send your letters to **Lurene Haines, c/o Arena Magazine, 264 Main St., Florence, KY 41042.**

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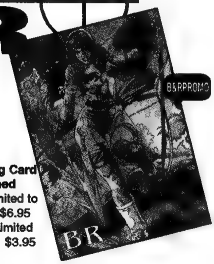

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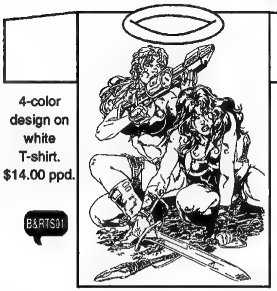

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